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Marie Antoinette

Sarah Tytler

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MARIE ANTOINETTE

THE WOMAN AND QUEEN

BY

SARAH TYTLER

"Her imperial character, which appeared at great moments, was not her habitual character. She was only the daughter of the Cæsars by sallies. She was made to be the peaceful, somewhat *bergère* heiress of an empire, rather than to reconquer a crown. . . . She was made, above all, to be an amiable woman, a constant and faithful friend, a tender and devoted mother."

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MARIE ANTOINETTE

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EDITED BY

WALTER BESANT, M.A., AND REV. W. J. BRODRIBB, M.A.

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THE Author of the present attempt to sketch Marie Antoinette's life, not as part of the history of the great French Revolution, but as the biography of the woman and Queen, has been much indebted to the following works:—"From the Court Life of Maria Theresa" (Khevenhüller and Adam Wolf); "The Secret Correspondence between Maria Theresa and the Comte de Mercy-Argenteau, &c., &c.;" "Letters of Marie Antoinette, Joseph II., and Leopold II." (MM. d'Arnette and Geffroy); "Letters of Marie Clotilde de France, &c., &c." (the Comte de Reiset); "Correspondence between Marie Antoinette and the Darmstadt Family;" "Les Beaux jours de Marie Antoinette" (Isabert de Saint Amand); the "Memoirs of Marie Antoinette, by MM. Goncourt;" the "Narrative of Weber;" "Memoirs by the Duchesse d'Angoulême;" "Memoirs, &c., &c., by Madame Campan;" "Life of Madame Vigée-Lebrun;" Yonge's "Marie Antoinette;" Carlyle's "French Revolution" and "Diamond Necklace;" "Life of the Duchesse D'Angoulême" (Mrs. Romer and Dr. Doran).

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MARIE ANTOINETTE.

INTRODUCTORY.

THE year 1755 was memorable in Europe for the great Lisbon earthquake, in which thirty thousand people are said to have perished. On this 2nd of November, All Souls' Day, far out of reach of the terrible calamity, there was born in the neighbourhood of the beautiful, gay, music-loving city of Vienna, one of the fairest of its fair daughters, the best-beloved, the best-hated, the most ill-fated woman and princess of her time. Her dignity and sweetness, grace and goodness, nay, her very faults and follies—free as they were from any taint of vice or cruelty—for which she was destined to pay so awful a penalty, have won for her tender charity and gentle pity from the sternest of her just judges, both in her own and later times.

"Beautiful, high-born, that wert so foully hurled low!" exclaims the great historian of the French Revolution. And he winds up his apostrophe with

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the righteous, commiserating sentence—"Thy fault in the French Revolution was that thou wert the symbol of the sin and misery of a thousand years; that with Saint Bartholomews and Jacqueries, with Gabelles and Dragonades and Parcs-aux-cerfs, the heart of mankind was filled full, and foamed over into all-involving madness. To no Napoleon, to no Cromwell wert thou wedded; such sit not in the highest rank of themselves; are raised on high by the shaking and confounding of all the ranks. As poor peasants, how happy and worthy had ye two been. But by evil destiny ye were made a king and queen of, and so both once more are become an astonishment and a by-word to all time." Marie Antoinette's name, after nearly a hundred years, remains a household word—not in France and Europe alone, but in all the civilised countries of the world.

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CHAPTER I.

MARIA THERESA, THE KAISER, THE ARCHDUKES AND ARCHDUCHESSES.

MARIA THERESA, daughter of the Emperor Charles VI., was born to be ruler of many kingdoms. Her early struggles were past. She had been brave and enduring enough in her young womanhood to defy the armies of the great Frederic, when he sought to wrest from her ancestral rights and rich provinces. She was true to the instincts of her own loyal, warm heart, and won a fervent response to her passionate, patriotic appeal as a beautiful, helpless princess, with her baby prince in her arms. She summoned Hungarian, Bohemian, Pandour, and Croat to rise and fight in the cause of her and her son, and of national independence against the Brandenburg usurper. The summons was obeyed, and the wars of the Succession and the Seven Years were well over, but the burden of the sway of a far-reaching sceptre weighed heavily on the woman's shoulders, which yet bore them so gallantly. We see

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her busy every day with her ministers and ambassadors, working till six o'clock in the evening at an open window, even in winter; for her Kaiser did not love work, while his title of Emperor was but an empty sound. Though it had been otherwise—*die hohe frau war ganz selbstandig*—Francis' broad common sense and forbearance did no more than sometimes soften her sternness; and her Prime Minister, Kaunitz, was only her excellent servant.

In the evening, the great Queen read or talked. Like her son Joseph, she was fond of intellectual conversation amongst her friends. But she by no means objected to the splendour of her rank, or to galas and festivities. The opera and the theatre were to her what they are to all true Germans. The whole family were musical, and the clear, sweet singing of many of the daughters was a gift derived from their mother. She enjoyed, so long as her Kaiser lived, the great masqued balls which were the most brilliant entertainments of the generation. She would appear in a robe of silver brocade, the bodice of blue silk sewn with diamonds, and with diamond stars in her powdered hair. She cared almost as much for pearls as her daughter Marie Antoinette cared for diamonds. No woman in Europe had such pearls as Maria Theresa possessed.

Maria Theresa was regular in all church services, fasting, and prayer. When her Kaiser was sick, she

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waited on him day and night. During the illnesses and deaths of six of her children, she became their devoted nurse.

The Emperor was a great contrast to the Empress, while he was her first and only love. She was deeply attached to him, and would with difficulty, and only on hard compulsion, blame a life framed on no very high standard, pleasure-loving to excess, and tending to license. She made his name appear with hers in all her proclamations, and liked to have their pictures and statues on horseback placed together. To do Francis justice, he had won the love of Austria and Hungary no less than of Maria Theresa, for he had many manly and lovable qualities. He was brave, honest, kind. He had seen the world—had travelled in Germany, France, England, and Italy. For that matter, the Austrian Court had the advantage of being the least confined to one place of all its contemporaries. Maria Theresa's rule extended to many lands; and though she appointed governors-general, she did more than itinerate among a few castles round Vienna. She resided now in Vienna, now at Prague, now at Presburg, now at Pesth, now at Innsbrück. The Emperor and his son were both crowned at Frankfort. If Francis was no reader, he took an interest in natural science, mechanics, and manufactures, and did his best to promote them. He recognised and acknowledged the higher nature of his wife,

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yielding to her. However negligent and unconstrained his own manners and habits, he too loved order and discipline in the great family of children to whom he was tenderly attached, acting to them almost like a *bürgerlicher Hausvater.* He hated nobody; his anger was easily quenched. As far as his hand could reach, he made everybody happy. He was a mighty hunter, tiring out all the young nobles, when the Court was at Laxenburg, by his hard riding in the chase. He was almost as mighty a feaster, delighting in crowded, boisterous evening meals, at which neither Maria Theresa nor her eldest son—who both ate little or nothing at supper—cared to appear. The Kaiser had a passion for the theatre, and was apt to indulge in high play, whether at faro or lansquenet. The Princess Auersberg, a great thrower of the dice, lost in two games at Court four thousand ducats; Khevenhüller, the chamberlain,[1] lost in two years ten thousand florins. In the early years of her reign, Maria Theresa played willingly, and with peculiarly happy fortune: once she won a string of pearls. Latterly, regular play was given up at the Austrian Court. Joseph hated all kinds of games.

The Kaiser tramps across the stage, a stalwart, jovial figure, until we can hear the echo of his

[1] Writer of the diary—selections from which have been published by Adam Wolf.

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resounding hunting-horn—of the bells of the sledge in which he led the great sledging matches (one of the favourite amusements of the Court)—of the jokes he loved to crack in the French tongue, which he spoke almost always—of his hearty laughter.

Of the ten children of the Emperor and Empress-Queen who grew up, the eldest son, Joseph, crowned first King of Rome and then Emperor on his father's death, was born in 1741, and was fourteen years Marie Antoinette's senior. The relations between Joseph and his mother, even in the youth of the prince, were those of two strong spirits that, in spite of their warm mutual affection, of which there could be no doubt, proved in some respects irreconcilable. The extent of their regard only rendered the lack of sympathy between them more trying, and the almost inevitable discord more grievous. She was of the old *régime*, feudal and patriarchal in her notions; he represented the young Austria of his day, full of the new ideas of independent progress which were permeating society.

Joseph was a tall, slight, handsome lad, fair-haired and blue-eyed, like the rest of the young troop. He had a high forehead, an aquiline nose, a bright keen glance. The old lords about the Court saw with regret that he was inclined to cast aside ancient customs. He despised state and show, hated heavy banquets, danced seldom, did not care to understand

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cards, and only engaged in a game of piquet to please his mother. But he was the delight of the young Court when he appeared on horseback, as he gladly did, for he was the best and foremost rider in the *carrousel,* or species of tournament, held in the riding-school. His mother saw him with pride at the head of his regiment. Surely seldom was there a goodlier heir to a crown than the manly, grave young archduke, in his green coat faced with red, gold-laced vest, and yellow leather riding breeches, with his powdered hair thrown back and tied in a black silk bag, as he is to be seen in his picture at Laxenburg. Fortune seemed to shine on him. He was married in 1760, before he was twenty, to a very charming bride, Marie Isabelle, the Infanta of Parma. She was eighteen years of age, beautiful and *spirituelle,* with a dark complexion, and brown, sparkling eyes. Most people know the tender, pathetic story—how Joseph was devoted to her, until their world marvelled at the silent young archduke's passion for his wife; how, in spite of her goodness and the favour which she everywhere inspired, an inexpressible melancholy hung over her, from the foreboding of an early death; and how the foreboding was fulfilled when she died, after the birth of her second child, from small-pox, at the age of twenty-one. Joseph was inconsolable, and wore her portrait to the end of his life.

Joseph's second marriage, to Princess Josepha of

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Bavaria, was not a happy one. At the same time there were great rejoicings. High festival was held at Schönbrunn, the great country palace. Among other galas, an opera of Gluck's was given by the young archdukes and archduchesses. The bridegroom himself played the pianoforte accompaniment, the Archduke Leopold directed the orchestra, the Archduchess Elisabeth sang the part of Apollo, her sisters Amalie, Josepha, and Caroline the parts of the three Graces. The three little ones, the boy Archdukes Ferdinand and Maximilian, and the small Archduchess Antoine or Antoinette, a lovely little girl of nine years, danced in the ballet. One can fancy this was her first appearance in public. In order to draw down a blessing on her son's marriage, the Empress arranged the weddings of twenty-five young couples, each couple receiving a fitting wedding portion.

In the summer of the same year (1765), the Court was about to travel to Innsbrück to receive a Spanish infanta, the bride of the Archduke Leopold, then a lad of eighteen. On the eve of starting, the Emperor Francis, a hale man of fifty-seven, delayed for a moment in order to send for his little pet archduchess, Antoinette, and give her a parting kiss.

In the middle of the festivities at Innsbrück, the bridegroom became so ill that fears were entertained for his life. He was better, and the Emperor had been in the theatre as usual. As he was returning,

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Joseph observed his father stagger; but the Emperor remarked it was nothing—a customary attack—a brave man (*ein braver kerl*) should not pay attention to such things—and said Joseph might go on. The latter made as if he were passing into the adjoining room, but did not take his eyes off his father, and observed that, as the Emperor came down the passage with tottering steps, when he got to the half-open door of the ante-chamber, he clutched at it for support. Joseph sprang forward and caught his father in his arms as he began to sink, until Graf Salm came, and the two, with the help of servants, carried the poor gentleman into the ante-chamber. They laid him on a lacquey's truckle-bed. Confessor, physician, and chirurgeon were immediately called. They opened a vein, but he gave no sign of life. The Kaiser was dead of apoplexy.

Joseph, his father's darling from childhood, was dreadfully shaken; the Empress, who at the first news of the Emperor's illness had hurried to him, was frozen with horror. Something like force was needed to draw her away. She retired into her room, and would suffer nobody to be with her during the night.

Maria Theresa never forgot her husband. She ceased largely from that time to attend the great court galas. She moved comparatively little from the neighbourhood of Vienna. She was still a stately woman of forty-seven years of age, capable of the

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closest attention to the business of her realms, for the driest details of which she is said to have had an exhaustless appetite. She prayed and fasted more than ever. She was wont to have herself let down into the vault of the Capuchin chapel, where the body of Francis had been laid with all honour. She would pray there by her husband's coffin: she continued the practice for fifteen years, till shortly before her death.

In the following April the fates of the two elder daughters of the house were settled. The Archduchess Marie Anne, the eldest of the family, was misshapen and sickly. As far as one can gather from references in letters, and her own simple, affecting record of her mother's last days, she was a good and tender-hearted woman. At the same time that her sister Marie Christine was married, Marie Anne, then twenty-eight years of age, was appointed by the Empress the future abbess of the *Damenstiftes*, or foundation for the maintenance of poor ladies of rank at Prague. Marie Christine, whom her mother and husband called "Mimi," is said to have been the favourite daughter of the Empress. She was very pretty, clever, and lively, and had the wonderfully beautiful hands for which the family of Maria Theresa were famous. She was twenty-four, and her heart was given to a handsome, worthy young prince, who had resided at her mother's Court. Prince Albert of Saxony, created Duke of Teschen, was the son of the King of Poland

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and uncle of Louis XVI., through Louis's mother the Dauphiness. Maria Theresa at first opposed the marriage, considering that the rank of the prince did not entitle him to wed with a daughter of the Imperial house; but the mother yielded when she saw that her child's heart was set on the bridegroom.

There is a pretty description of the betrothal, which took place in Vienna, when the bride wore a rose-coloured gown covered with Brussels point, and the quaint ceremony occurred of the *oberhofmeisterin* fastening the portrait of the bridegroom on the bride's breast. Five days later, the marriage was celebrated at Schlosshof, a country seat which Maria Theresa had presented to her husband. We have a description of the event from the pen of the future abbess, Marie Anne. On the birthday of Duke Albert the young couple were married. The bride wore a white muslin, with silver flowers, quite covered with precious stones. The Court ladies were in white, the gentlemen in grey. In the evening the bride and bridegroom played at ombre with the Empress. At the marriage supper there was a crowd of spectators, the peasants being free to enter. Next day there was a peasants' fête, with corbeilles and lotteries for the distribution of gifts.

Duke Albert, who had been named a field-marshal and captain-general of Hungary, held Court with his wife at Presburg.

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In this year another son's lot was decided in Italy, for the Archduke Leopold had already succeeded to his father's grand-duchy of Tuscany, and kept his Court in Florence. And now the Archduke Ferdinand, a boy of twelve, was betrothed to one of the Marie Beatrices of Este, in this instance the heiress of Modena.

In 1767 Vienna was filled with consternation on learning that the Empress-Queen and two other members of the imperial family—the young Empress and the year-old wife, the Archduchess Marie Christine—were all lying ill with small-pox. The poor young Empress died. The Empress-mother, who had caught the disease from imprudently kissing her daughter-in-law, narrowly escaped with her life.

In July, Maria Theresa was able to go to Laxenburg with Joseph and three of her archduchesses who had gone through small-pox, among them the twelve-years-old Marie Antoinette. On the following Sunday, as in old times, the Empress went with her suite on foot through the streets of the little town to the parish church. She returned to Vienna to be present at a great *Te Deum*, with trumpets and kettledrums, in the cathedral, in the company of her whole family, and of the generation that had grown up with her, and shared her joys and sorrows. In the evening the streets remained crowded, and the

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Empress threw from her windows in the Burg memorial coins issued for the occasion.

In the following August there were great rejoicings for the betrothal of the Archduchess Josepha, a charming girl of sixteen, to the King of Naples. He had been destined for another sister, the Archduchess Joanna, who had died at twelve years of age. The betrothal was celebrated at Schönbrunn on the 8th of September. Of the comedy and opera performed on the occasion, Khevenhüller remarks, naïvely and severely, that the former was a bad adaptation of the English novel "Tom Jones," and the latter—"Parthenope," by Metastasio, set to music by Gluck—a very weak composition.

The Archduke Ferdinand was to have represented the King of Naples at the marriage by proxy, but the archduchess complained of illness, and remained at home when the Emperor, with his remaining sisters and brothers, went to see the new opera of "Psyche," written for the occasion, and performed along with "Orpheus and Eurydice." Khevenhüller complains that the subjects were not suitable, and says when the people heard later of the illness of the bride, a bad omen was drawn from the strange choice of two such sad themes. The credulous recalled that about the time the Infanta Isabelle lost her precious young life, "Orpheus and Eurydice" had been often given in Vienna. The truth was, that the plague of small-pox

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had again declared itself. By the 6th of October, couriers were sent to Italy and Spain, in order to put off the arrival of the archduchess, and to defer all the preparations—since, even though her disease took a favourable turn, she could not travel that year.

The Empress herself nursed her daughter at Schönbrunn. It was noted that the poor young archduchess sickened on her father's birth-day, and died on her mother's fête-day; that at the hour of her betrothal at Schönbrunn, she fell into the last crisis of her malady; and that, in the chapel where she should have stood a bride, she lay a corpse.

It was well known that, on the last morning the archduchess had driven with her mother to Laxenburg, Maria Theresa had taken her daughter to the family vault in the Capuchin chapel, in order that, according to the filial piety of the day, the departing bride might bid farewell to her father in his coffin. The servants had taken the precaution of covering with a cloth the wooden coffin of the Empress Josepha —whose leaden coffin was not ready—and of opening the window and airing the vault. But the impression remained that the air had been infected. The girl-bride had been much overcome, for she had not been accustomed to the place. She related in the evening that she had knelt down by the coffin of her sister Joanna, who had been brought up with her, and whose place she filled, and in tender trust had prayed

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that she, Joanna, might pray for her, Josepha, to God, that if her marriage were not for the good of her soul, the dear God might hinder it in the moment of her departure.

Madame Campan has another version of the same story, as told to her by Marie Antoinette; but Madame Campan's memory was not infallible. In her account there are various discrepancies, such as that which gives the idea of Marie Antoinette's being a little child at the date of her sister's death, when in reality she was a girl nearly thirteen years of age, soon to be a bride herself. It is worth while to point out the contradictions, since it is in a great measure on this widely-circulated story that the unfounded accusation—not of strictness, but of harshness to her daughters—has been brought against Maria Theresa.

Without disputing the austerity of the practice of praying in the vault, and the injudiciousness of requiring the performance from a sensitive young girl in such circumstances, any unprejudiced person will admit that the Empress's accompanying her daughter for the solemn ceremony which was so familiar to the mother, makes a considerable difference in the severity of the ordeal. The use of the verb *mitnehmen* by Khevenhüller leaves no doubt of this qualification of the incident.

The King of Naples was little affected by the death of the second of the brides, neither of whom he

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had seen. In another month his ambassador sought the hand of a third daughter, the Archduchess Caroline, and the Empress, with something of the spirit of a Spartan mother, placed her in the breach. Without question, Maria Theresa held that the prosperity and peace of Europe were bound up with the well-being and far-reaching sway of Austria. In this conviction she looked to her daughters, no less than to her sons, as loyal children and subjects, to maintain and increase the influence of Austria, at whatever cost.

We hear nothing of the Archduchess Caroline's reluctance and apprehension in following in the footsteps of her sisters, though she was not older than the Archduchess Josepha. Burdened with an utterly frivolous husband, and led astray by a bold, passionate temper, the poor Queen of Naples came to grief more than once. She struggled vainly against the domination and insults of Spain long before she had to take refuge from a still more formidable and detested enemy on board an English man-of-war, when her dictatorial vagaries vexed the spirit of our great sea-captain.

The Archduchess Amalie was, according to German taste, the most beautiful of the archduchesses, and she proved the most refractory. She was averse to all of French blood, though alliance with France was one of the Empress's chief lines of policy. When, in 1768, a year after the marriage of the Archduchess

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Caroline, the Archduchess Amalie, then a young woman of twenty-four, was given to the Infanta of Parma, a silly lad of eighteen, she went to his small domain bent on becoming the sovereign power there, heedless of the contempt which she brought on her husband. She was imperious and arrogant, destitute both of common sense and right feeling. Far more than the laughing young girl who started from Vienna to become the first lady in the most dignified and corrupt Court in Europe, the Infanta hated the very name of etiquette, and trampled under foot the most necessary restrictions. She threw open her balls to all the world, and had not only the inferior officers of her guards, but the very lacqueys mingling on terms of equality with their master and mistress in the dance. She succeeded in embroiling Parma with both France and Spain, and forced the Empress at one time to decline all communication with her.

The Archduchess Elisabeth, who sang the part of Apollo in Gluck's opera, ended, like the Archduchess Marie Anne, by singing matins and vespers in a convent, of which she became the abbess, at Innsbrück.

The Archduke Maximilian, Maria Theresa's youngest child, became Prince-Elector of Cologne and Bishop of Munster.

One more well-authenticated Viennese anecdote, though it is not to be found in the pages of Khevenhüller as presented to us by Adam Wolf, will suffice.

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The incident happened within the recollection of Marie Antoinette, and is referred to in the letters which passed between her and her mother.

On a memorable evening the Court theatre of Vienna was, as usual, full of players and spectators, though the Empress's box, which communicated by a private passage with the palace, was not graced by her presence. Suddenly she appeared in front of it, without any of the state and splendour which had been wont to distinguish her; on the contrary, she was in simple homely undress, little better than that of an ordinary German *Hausfrau*, while what had once been her great beauty was marred and faded. She came to her people, as to her children, for the sympathy which they had never denied to her. "I wish to let you know," she cried in her frank, ringing voice, "that Leopold" (she is said to have used a pet name equivalent to "Poldie") "has got a boy (*ein bube*)," and the house rang with exulting plaudits. The Emperor was a widower and childless, but his next brother, Leopold, happy in his Spanish bride and Tuscan subjects, had become the father of a son. An heir was born to the great Austrian Empire.

Such is the stock of which Marie Antoinette sprang, such the surroundings among which her early years were spent. Without some notice of them her story is not complete; neither is it possible to form an entirely correct judgment of her character and life.

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CHAPTER II.

THE BRIDE, THE BETROTHAL, AND THE JOURNEY.

AT last it was Marie Antoinette's turn to figure as the royal bride, and no doubt she had often anticipated the *rôle* in assisting at the recent marriages of her sisters, for her own high destiny had been long projected, and she had been in a manner educated for it. Yet it must be confessed that, at fourteen years and a-half, the Dauphiness-elect was no farther forward in the most simple scholarship than the mass of the girls of her age in her generation. She was inferior to those who had been sedulously trained even at that date, and she was far behind a fairly clever and intelligent school-girl of the present generation. The young Archduchess had small grammatical knowledge of the French language, to which her attention had been naturally turned; she did not write or speak it at all well, though her expressions were full of the fire and grace of her ardent, happy disposition. She did not even speak her native German correctly. Her reading—always of the most

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fragmentary, desultory nature—could hardly be said to have begun. Her handwriting brought on her many a reprimand. Although she was fond of music, her playing, singing, and dancing were not good. She did not draw or paint. Her only teacher who had won himself credit was the Italian poet, Metastasio, for she was fairly acquainted with Italian.

In spite of these disadvantages, however, when Marie Antoinette reached France, she had learnt many things which were largely of foreign growth in the soil to which she was transplanted. Notwithstanding her perfect girlishness, with all its innocent ignorances, negligences, and indiscretions, she knew what duty to God and man meant, and respected it from the bottom of her youthful heart; she was thoroughly well intentioned—pathetically anxious to do right and please her mother, who was still moving the springs that ruled the daughter's actions; she was tender, as she continued to be to the last moment of her existence, to whatever suffering she saw or understood; she had a character at once open, ardent, sweet, and gay.

Her beauty was still in the bud; she was yet at the angular stage of early girlhood, which is all shoulders and elbows. Her aquiline features were too strongly marked; but her complexion of lilies and roses, which so dazzled Horace Walpole in years to come, her sapphire blue eyes, her sunny hair, her radiant

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smile, in which the Hapsburg pout of the under lip was lost, were there in their glory. When Marie Antoinette was thirteen, what had been planned and talked of for years took shape and form. Negotiations were openly entered into by the French ambassador at Vienna, the Marquis de Durfort, acting on the instructions of the French Minister for foreign affairs, the Duc de Choiseul—who moved, or was supposed to move, in his turn at the instance of Louis XV.—for the betrothal of the youngest archduchess to the Dauphin, a lad not two years older than herself. He was the eldest surviving son, succeeding at the age of eleven years to the late Dauphin, who had died unregretted by his father the king, but mourned even to death by his widow, the sister of Duke Albert of Saxe-Teschen, and by his mother, poor Marie Leczinska. The treaty of marriage, which had for some time been Maria Theresa's heart's desire, was concluded in the following year, in the month of April, 1770. Amidst many forms and ceremonies, in a grand Court held for the occasion in the palace at Vienna, between row upon row of imperial guards in full uniform, the ambassador, in his Court dress, advanced to where the Emperor Joseph and his mother, the widowed Empress, awaited him in high state, and with fit courtly obeisance, in the name of the King of France, requested the hand of the Archduchess Marie Antoinette for Louis the Dauphin.

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Then Marie Antoinette made her entrance on the scene. We have no record what were her feelings; how the young heart fluttered; whether anxiety to comport herself as became her rank and maidenhood, or childish exultation and delight at the splendid gaiety and her prominent part in it, prevailed; we do not even know whether she wore "a rose-coloured dress covered with Brussels point lace," or "a white muslin with silver flowers" and hailstones of diamonds, when she was ushered up to the august group of imperial brother, imperial mother, and the French ambassador. She heard the royal proposal, and the equally royal consent; she had given to her, for a special token, a letter from her unseen bridegroom, and she underwent the ceremony of having his last miniature fastened on her breast. Of this we may be certain, that she bore herself bravely in her part of the play; though we also know, from incontrovertible integral evidence, that she was not then the stately, gracious young queen which she lived to become, but a very young, unformed girl of fourteen, as thoughtless as other girls of her age. So it is highly probable that what she enjoyed most heartily and looked forward to most eagerly at the moment were the resort to the Court theatre immediately after the ceremony, and the round of Court festivities, in which she was not only allowed to mingle, but of which she was the heroine. Among them was a grand masqued

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ball—so grand an affair, that Austrian wit and invention, not to say public and private exchequers, were heavily taxed to prepare for it, and all the light young hearts and heads in Vienna must have bestowed many a thought on it. Among Marie Antoinette's early friends and companions were two young girls—princesses brought up at her mother's Court—Charlotte and Louise of Hesse-Darmstadt, with but three days' difference in age between Princess Charlotte and the Archduchess Marie Antoinette. The three girls were united together by an attachment which was revived later in life, and survived to the end of their very different destinies.

On the 21st of April, Marie Antoinette took leave of the mother she was never to see again, of her family and early friends, and turned her back for ever on the Prater and the Danube, Schönbrunn and moated Laxenburg. All the palace, all Vienna, was full of excitement—in the case of the city, of loyal affection and sentimental lamentation, reaching to the height of cries of grief. Their Empress's fair young daughter, in whose coming exaltation they had taken the utmost pride—who was to do them such honour and service at the French Court—she whose bright face was familiar to them in its readiness to beam with easily-called-forth smiles, or to cloud over with momentary gravity in sympathy with some poor man or woman's trouble—was departing on her long journey, and, as

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many of the spectators must have perceived, without much prophetic insight, her difficult career. But there was more than loyal affection and sentimental lamentation in the sorrow of mother and daughter which Marie Antoinette did not care to hide. According to an eye-witness, when the great coach rolled out of the palace court, the girl-bride covered her face with her hands, which yet could not conceal the tears that streamed through her slender fingers. She turned again and again for a last farewell-look at home.

The same day the Empress wrote the first of her earnest, affectionate letters to her daughter. Maria Theresa had to take extraordinary precautions, and she urged her daughter to do the same, in conducting this correspondence. The letters were sent by special messengers and separate couriers; loose leaves were inserted, and additions made at the last moment, to prevent private communications being treated as public property. There was an imperative necessity that the letters should be burnt as soon as read. In constantly writing to her ambassador, Comte de Mercy-Argenteau, and requiring from him long replies in detail on her daughter's affairs, Maria Theresa guarded herself and her correspondent by the same ceaseless, elaborate manœuvres.

In the sweet spring-tide, Marie Antoinette drove on with her great train of nobles to meet her fate.

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By the time the travellers—everywhere hailed with jubilant huzzas, and followed with fervent good wishes—reached the boundaries of Germany, though she might spare a lingering regret for the last German-speaking town, her rosy cheeks were dry, her blue eyes shining, her fair curls dancing, as she looked eagerly round on the country flushed with tender green, and returned, by continual acknowledgments, the endless *vivats* of the crowds which lined the roads.

Marie Antoinette crossed the bridge over the Rhine and made her public entrance into Strasburg in the most gorgeous of state carriages, flaming with crimson and gold, surmounted by wrought and tinted wreaths and nosegays of flowers. She was received into her adopted country with salutes from regiments of cavalry, salvoes of cannon from the ramparts, the loud clanging of bells, fountains playing with wine—all the insignia of joy on such occasions. There was a living soul given to it in this instance, by the fact that the excitable French people, *les gens de people*, forgot their immeasurable grievances and hard lot to shout with the best. They broke out into ecstacy over their beautiful young Dauphiness.

Marie Antoinette, quick, kind, and tender-hearted as she was, knew nothing—as how should she?—a girl of fourteen and a-half, granted that she was a princess, soon to be a wedded wife—of the black

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shadow on the other side of the picture, when she spent her first day in France. It was literally crammed with ceremonies and festivities, ranging through her public entrance, her reception at the Episcopal Palace, her Court held for the first time for the benefit of the noble ladies of the province, the public dinner in state, the visit to the theatre, where the people generally might see and be seen, the drive through the illuminated streets, and, finally, the ball in her honour, which had to be deferred till midnight, so much had to come before it. A weary, as well as a dizzy young head rested on its laced pillow that night.

Yet, as it happened in the middle of the cloudless sunshine of gaiety and triumph, a more striking and evil omen than that of any gloomily conceived gala tapestry or Court opera overtook her, though she little guessed it, and there was none to point it out; she had not well set foot in France, when she encountered, in the magnificent robes of a cardinal's coadjutor, the man who was to prove her deadly foe—the insolent and profligate Prince Louis de Rohan.

From Strasburg, Marie Antoinette travelled onwards, with the deliberation of those days, to other towns with hoary ramparts and solemn cathedrals; past many a grey, high-roofed, turretted château, at some of which she halted an honoured guest; past many a wooden auberge, red-roofed church, thatch-roofed, mud-walled village; through tracts of forest,

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fenced in by seignioral rights, with shady glades, where the primroses and hyacinths were already giving place to the lily of the valley; among springing vineyards and blossoming orchards, and fields of sprouting rye, rather than wheat, and flax; along walnut and poplar-bordered roads, often strewn with violets and jonquils; across well-watered meadows, where cattle browsed. Everywhere there was a throng of holiday people, fain to forget for the moment the salt-tax, the road-making, the terrible seignioral privileges—everywhere a succession of galas—a perfect hurricane of rejoicing from the bride's new French subjects. Even to this day, across a gulf greater than that of years, the vivid impression made by the whole scene, and especially by its central figure, still lingers. Marie Antoinette's fresh young beauty, and the grace of her frank, kindly manners, as when she threw down the carriage-windows to show herself, and answered smile for smile and word for word, won her such favour, that its faint fragrance survived and mingled here and there, shamefacedly and sorrowfully, with the envenomed hatred which the multitude bore to her at last.

The exigencies of the royal state of France, unsurmounted by a bridegroom's ardour on the part of the slow, silent, half-abashed, half-loutish Dauphin, prevented any gallant haste to meet Marie Antoinette where her future husband and kindred were concerned.

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It was not till the girl-princess approached Compiègne —so frequently the resort of the hunting kings and their suites—that there was any sign of majesty bestirring itself to meet personally the bride who had travelled so long and far. Then her staunch friend—as she always persisted in holding him—who had arranged her marriage, the autocratic Duc de Choiseul, arrived, preceding the royal coach surrounded by the royal guards, and containing Louis XV., his grandson the Dauphin and bridegroom, and the Prince's aunts Mesdames,[1] the unmarried daughters of the King.

Eager as the young Archduchess was to be satisfied; dazzled as she and those around her were by the splendid rank, power, and superficial glamour of the group; overwhelming as were the assurances that all was well, all was *à merveille*, urged upon Marie Antoinette by her courtly and diplomatic escort, the family party did not form an auspicious spectacle. Women of inferior rank still described themselves as ready to swoon before the first glimpse of the majesty of Louis XV.; but seen near at hand, not even the diamond star, the riband *couleur de feu* of the order of St. Louis, the air of command, could lend any real majesty to the prematurely-old, elaborately-polite cynic, worn and weary in the pursuit of pleasure and

[1] "Madame" was the term by which a King of France's daughter was named, while the King's next brother was styled "Monsieur."

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vice. The Dauphin looked a heavy, ungainly lad, bashful and *sauvage.* Mesdames appeared the domineering, prejudiced, meddlesome middle-aged women they truly were. On the appearance of the royal coach, Marie Antoinette and all her train alighted. Reversing the natural order of proceeding, her master of the horse led her up to the coach. This part of the programme had been well learned by her. She attempted to kneel, after the fashion of other royal brides before and after her—was anticipated in the act of homage—raised and embraced, not by the bridegroom, but by his grandfather, who made a set speech, complimenting Maria Theresa, and then presented the Archduchess to the Dauphin. His response is unrecorded. Doubtless, if he could nerve and spur himself to the feat, he kissed, in his clumsy way, the little hand which was about to be bestowed on him, recoiling from the bold step he had taken, and withdrawing into his impenetrable shell the next moment.

Further introductions to Mesdames followed, and still more introductions to the illustrious kindred of the royal family—Orleans, Condé, &c., &c.—when the party reached the castle.

The marriage ceremony did not take place at Compiègne, but at Versailles, to which the King and his Court, with the Archduchess in their keeping, journeyed, taking in their route the Convent of St.

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Denis, in which the King's youngest daughter, Madame Louise, deformed like the Archduchess Marie Anne, was a Carmelite nun, and where she made the acquaintance of her future niece and queen.

At the hunting lodge of La Muette, in the Bois de Boulogne, the bride saw still nearer relatives, who might be expected to have considerable influence on the future *ménage*. These were the brothers and sisters of the Dauphin—the Comte de Provence, also a heavy-looking lad; the Comte d'Artois, slim and sprightly; the Princess Clotilde, plump, to say the least, and soon to be known as *Gros Madame;* and the Princess Elizabeth, a loving and lovable little soul. The brothers and sisters were mere boys and girls, ranging from thirteen or so downwards to eight years. Their faults and follies, like those of their royal sister-in-law, ought to have had the excuse, not always granted to them, of extreme youth.

But there was another, and an utterly unwarrantable guest at the royal table this evening, who was for long years Marie Antoinette's powerful rival and inveterate enemy. Madame du Barry was a young woman with crisp flaxen hair, regular features, a brilliant complexion, sleepy, languishing eyes, and an affectation of infantile prattle by way of conversation. She was as silly as she pretended to be, which did not prevent her from being also crafty, and greedy of power and wealth.

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After supper at La Muette, the King and his grandson went on to Versailles. In the course of next morning Marie Antoinette followed, and at one o'clock on the 16th of May, 1770, the marriage ceremony was performed in the chapel at Versailles, in the midst of a storm of thunder and lightning.

The officiating prelate was the Archbishop of Rheims, and a canopy of cloth of silver was held over the young pair by the Bishops of Senlis and Chartres, while the Dauphin managed to put the ring on the bride's slender finger, and to give her thirteen gold pieces, in token that he endowed her with his worldly goods, to which was added another and different heritage.

A grievous fatality attended the marriage rejoicings in Paris; a terrible fire broke out in connection with the *feu d'artifice* in the Place Louis Quinze, and hundreds of persons perished miserably.

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CHAPTER III.

OLD FRENCH COURT CUSTOMS—A DAY IN MARIE ANTOINETTE'S LIFE.

WHEN Marie Antoinette became Dauphiness, the daily life of royal personages in France was of the most artificial, elaborate kind; all service to the kings and queens, and, in a lower degree, to the dauphins and dauphinesses, was regarded as an honour to the persons serving—an honour to be keenly contended for by people of the highest rank, no matter what delay or inconvenience or unutterable weariness of spirit was experienced by the individuals thus served. These royal men and women could not pass from one room to another without being followed by trains of ladies and gentlemen. The ceremonies of rising and dressing were accompanied by laws and rites as irrevocable as the decrees of the Medes and Persians. These included the *petites entrées* and the *grandes entrées.* At the first, where the Queen was concerned—and, there being no Queen at this date, the Dauphiness filled

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her place—the physicians, reader, secretary, &c., &c., had the privilege of being present, whether the princess, in her dressing-gown, breakfasted in bed or out of it. The principal toilet did not take place till several hours later. At the great toilet, the toilet table, the most richly carved or inlaid piece of furniture in the room, was wheeled into the centre of the apartment. At the *grandes entrées*, sofas were ranged in circles for the ladies of the household. The members of the royal family, the princes of the blood (removed one or more degrees), the captains of the guards, and all great officers having the privilege, paid their court. There were well-defined degrees of royal salutation here and in the chapel—a smile, a nod, bending the body, or leaning forward as if to rise, which was the highest form of acknowledgment of acquaintance.

The ladies of the nobility of the highest rank occupied *tabourets* or stools in the presence of royalty. These *tabourets* were sometimes placed in the *ruelles*, or passages by the bed, which was railed round; the prince's sword lying on a chair near to his hand during the night. The order of precedence in sitting on the stools was often hotly and stubbornly disputed, and one of the early offences of the Dauphiness was the merry laughter which the squabbles of the *grandes dames*—some of them very ancient—provoked in the young mistress of the ceremonies.

Mass was never neglected at the Court of the most

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Christian and the most profligate king. The Dauphin, like his father and grandfather, was punctilious in the performance of his religious duties, with a more satisfactory result in the case of the grandson, for the Dauphin's life was morally blameless. In a sort of journal which he kept up to the fiercest outbreak of the revolution, the sole events recorded were the masses he had attended and the hunts in which he had taken part.

If the princess wanted her gloves or a glass of water, what she desired was brought by a page on a gold salver, and the salver was presented in turn with solemn precision, according to the grades of the people present, by a bed-chamber woman to a lady-in-waiting; but if the chief *dame d'honneur*, or a princess of the blood, or any member of the royal family entered at the time, the salver was returned to the waiting-woman, and by her offered again to the *dame d'honneur* or the princess that she might have the privilege of presentation, till at last the article reached its destination.

When the King dined in public, no woman, however nearly related to him, was permitted to dine with him. When the Dauphiness dined by herself, or with the Dauphin, all the waiting at table was done by her ladies. Where the King and Queen dined, the principal lady knelt in full dress, hoop and all, and presented the basin, which served as a finger-

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glass, and the napkin to wipe the fingers. But the royal family dined habitually in public, for the benefit of the world. All respectable people of the higher classes, who sent their names to the grand chamberlain, were allowed to witness the spectacle, as well as to view the royal card-tables. Stories are told of country cousins so zealous in the pursuit of this branch of knowledge, that they would rush from the Dauphin and Dauphiness at their soup to the Comte and Comtesse de Provence at their *fricassée*, and wind up with Mesdames at their dessert. The art of eating in public with propriety is said to be acquired only by long practice.

Card-playing was the regular evening occupation—one may call it *ceremonial*—of the French Court, as, in fact, it was the evening amusement of all the upper classes throughout Europe at this time. The royal card-tables, like the royal hunts, were open to the remotest sprigs of gentility, and of course attracted a well-dressed mob, keenly interested in the maintenance of these two princely avocations. The highest card-tables were, as a matter of form, in the rooms of the highest lady in the kingdom—of the Queen when she lived, then of the Dauphiness, and, after her, of Madame Adelaïde, the King's eldest daughter. The King's or Dauphiness's "game" was formed of the members of his or her circle; however, strangers could not only look on, but bet on

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the cards of the gentlemen or ladies playing at the royal table.

In one of her early letters, the Dauphiness furnishes the Empress with an account of the manner in which the princess ordinarily spent her days. There was little variety beyond a change of country residences, for the Court was never in Paris in these years, and Marie Antoinette, so familiar with Vienna, did not make her much-longed-for public entrance into the capital of France for three years after her arrival in the country.

"I rise at ten o'clock, or nine o'clock, or at half-past nine, and having dressed [that is, taken her bath and put on her dressing-gown], I say my morning prayers, then I breakfast, then I go to my aunts', where I generally find the King. That lasts till half-past ten, and at eleven I have my hair dressed. At noon, what they call 'the chamber' is held, and everybody above the rank of common people may enter. I put on my rouge, and wash my hands before the company. [Alas for the necessity that the pretty pink cheeks should have been thus soiled! They were already so rosy, that one of the impudently familiar names which Madame du Barry gave to the Dauphiness, with the intention of disparaging her in the King's hearing, was *la petite Rousse*, 'little Red Cheeks.'] Then the men go out, and the women remain till I have dressed myself before them. At

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noon there is mass. If the King is at Versailles, I go with him and my husband and my aunts to mass; if he is not there, I go alone with M. the Dauphin; but always at the same hour. After the mass, we dine at two o'clock, before everybody; but that is finished in an hour and a-half, for we, both of us, eat very quickly. Then I go to M. the Dauphin's apartments, and if he has anything to do I retire to my own. I read, I write, or I work, for I am making a vest for the King, which does not get on very quickly; but I hope, by the grace of God, it will be finished in a few years. At three I go again to my aunts', where the King comes at that hour. At four, the Abbé [Vermond, her old tutor and present reader] comes to me. At five, every day, there is the harpsichord or singing-master, till six. At half-past six, I go almost every day to my aunts', when I do not take a walk. You must know that my husband goes almost always with me to my aunts'. At seven, we play cards till nine; but when it is fine weather, I go out and walk, and then the card-playing is not in my rooms, but in those of my aunts. At nine o'clock we sup, and when the King is not there, my aunts come and sup with us [Marie Antoinette and the Dauphin]; but when the King is there, we go after supper to their rooms [those of Mesdames] and wait for the King, who generally comes at a quarter from eleven; but in the meantime

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I lie down on a large sofa and sleep till the King comes. When the King is not there, we go to bed at eleven o'clock. That is one day; I shall write another time of what we do on Sundays and fête-days."

What a picture that is of the tired-out girl-princess withdrawing to the big sofa, and sleeping the sound sleep of youth and innocence, while the Court circle is hovering round, manœuvring, whispering intrigue and scandal in anticipation of the august entrance of the first man in his dominions—not of his time, like his predecessor, Louis the Great. Yet Louis XV., in the midst of all that was base and contemptible in his character and life, managed, like his grandfather, to impress his world with the grandeur and refinement of the atmosphere around him, and down in the provinces a dead man lay by the roadside, his famished mouth stuffed with grass.

Very soon the Empress and her ambassador, who desired above all things that their Archduchess should stand well with the King and the country, began to distrust with reason the intimacy between her and Mesdames, who stood far from well with either. It went without saying that the young girl should have been originally recommended to the elderly women's care—that she should have been bidden ask their opinions and submit to their decisions. But there was a *juste milieu* in everything, and she was the wise woman who looked about her, summoned her judg-

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ment and the paramount authority of the Empress to her aid, and let her conduct be guided by circumstances.

Yet it was by no means easy for a girl of fifteen to obey, or even to understand all the obligations and counter obligations presented to her. She was to influence her young husband, but not to attempt to rule him. She was to be civil to Madame du Barry, while holding her at the staff's end. She was on no account to show herself deficient in the *petits soins* which became her age and theirs, for Mesdames, and especially for the King. But she was not to submit to be set aside and trampled upon. She was to assert her rights, and claim her due, even from the King who scared his middle-aged daughters. Marie Antoinette, the badly educated, half-childish girl in her teens, was to take an interest in European politics, and aim at discussing them on every opportunity with the King and the Dauphin. At the same time, she was not to intrude or unduly assert her views, like her sister of Parma, always, unless when the interests of Austria called for it, and then she was to fling her entire youthful personality into the scale without scruple. She was to refrain absolutely from those recommendations to office for which her interest would be perpetually solicited, and to the granting of which the easy good-humour of one side of her nature might be exceedingly prone.

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What a wise head on young shoulders such elaborate representations required! The one with which Marie Antoinette, in her early experience, seemed to have the least difficulty in complying, was the discreet decree which ordered her to be frank and fearless in carrying her grievances straight to the King himself, and to seek redress from no other. She called him *Mon Papa*, and amused him, as far as he was capable of being amused, by her pretty attentions and lively sallies. But she also complained intrepidly of the banishment from the palace of her *dame de palais*, because of some supposed affront to Madame du Barry. Marie Antoinette remonstrated respectfully with the King on his speaking of her faults to her *dame d'honneur*, Madame de Noailles, and not saying to herself that she had done wrong. She even reproached him, artlessly enough, for going out to hunt as usual when his daughter, Madame Victoire, had been seized with measles. The Dauphiness said naïvely, in her vivid recollection of the happy family life at Schönbrunn, "But that is not kind of you, my Papa;" and the King was touched, *put out*, a little ashamed of himself, but not angry with her. It was on one of these occasions that Madame Adelaïde, half electrified, half indignant, drew a long breath, and made her famous speech—"It is plain you are not of our blood, Madame la Dauphine."

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CHAPTER IV.

OLD COMPANY.

THE Comte de Mercy watched over "our Archduchess" with well-nigh fatherly care. In his endless letters we catch a glimpse of the man himself; sometimes under a grave, sometimes under a comical aspect; a good man, though politic, as became a statesman; earnest in his great responsibility, modestly cautious of obtruding himself; wary—nay, wily—in his tact; still—allowing for a single-minded devotion to Austria, and a courtier's peculiar standards and enthusiasms—worthy, discreet, and faithful to death. We see him getting stiff and ailing in his services, feeling their fatigue and irksomeness; losing heart a little occasionally, but girding up his gouty foot, and hiring country quarters in every direction of the compass round the contracted area rather than be beaten, and doing his duty staunchly, in sorrow and dismay at last, to the end. We can conjure up De Mercy's figure, in his brocade coat and lace ruffles; his shrewd face, keenly but

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covertly on the outlook; his disarmingly well-bred, friendly address, however received, in whatever quarter. We can imagine his stolid imperturbability, when it was necessary, as he tapped one of the diamond-set snuff-boxes, with the portrait of his Empress on the lid, that he was graciously told to keep in the distribution of royal gifts, over which he presided. We can understand how the Empress-Queen, under the formal, abrupt phraseology of her letters—"Comte de Mercy, I see with regret," &c., &c.—put unbounded trust in this man; how her son Joseph, who held very different opinions of humanity in general, shared the trust; why Marie Antoinette, with her high spirit, deferred to her mother's ambassador, and depended upon him.

Another figure already conspicuous in the Dauphiness's surroundings was that of the ugly Abbé de Vermond, who lived to be "the best hated man in France." He was not, as has been erroneously stated, her confessor; he held an anomalous office as pseudo-tutor, sent with her from Vienna to continue her education as reader, and to some extent as confidential adviser and valuable auxiliary to Mercy. The Abbé was French in his origin, of humble birth, a Paris librarian at the time he was appointed tutor to the little Archduchess chosen to share the throne of France.

The Abbé has been differently described, but rarely

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with indulgence. Some say his manners, unlike those of his noble ally, were brusque and blunt, and what his critics considered insufferably arrogant; others represent the man as a perfect *persifleur*, with a smile, which believed in nothing, hovering on his thin lips, and an eye "piercing as if biting." These authorities insist that the Abbé was at once the most wicked and the most amiable of those waggish abbés —philosophers under the surface—who "made a bonfire of the religion of the monarchy without thinking of a conflagration." They contend that the Abbé developed Marie Antoinette's taste for raillery, and encouraged the laughter which made so many enemies; all we can say is that none of this appears in Mercy's or Maria Theresa's letters.

His patrons had the utmost confidence in the Abbé. Still he cannot be said to have done much for the Dauphiness's education. His reading was of the simplest, most perfunctory description—sometimes on French idioms; at other times, observations on French character and manners, or easy lessons in French history. Occasionally, the stilted historical novels, which were moulded on the grand Cyrus, formed the subject of study. When he reached Hume's "History of England," it was a feat to be boasted of. But the Abbé had to accommodate his instructions to the stage of information which his pupil had attained. He had to strive, above all things, not to bore or

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weary her—an attempt in which he was not always successful, to judge by her adroitness in shortening the three-quarters or half-hour of study, and her propensity to introduce the disturbing elements of children and dogs on the scene. He has been accused of writing Maria Antoinette's letters to the Empress; but Maria Theresa's complaints of the badness of her daughter's handwriting furnish proof of its genuineness, and the composition does not read like a man's, far less a learned and witty ex-librarian's work.

The magnificent Duc de Choiseul was a man after young Marie Antoinette's heart. She could admire his brilliance, and bask in the sunshine of his true sparkling French gaiety, while his *hauteur* was changed into chivalrous deference for her — his princess, his future queen, whom he had helped to raise to the throne. The accounts of the splendours of Chanteloup, altogether eclipsing those of Versailles, seemed only befitting their owner, and excited her delighted wonder, not her envy. Marie Antoinette long cherished a fervent regard for her first friend in France—not entirely with the Empress-Queen's approbation, since, though Choiseul had been her ally, his policy abroad was too autocratic and too decidedly French to please Maria Theresa. It would seem, too, as if she had been offended by the extravagant pretensions of some

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of the great minister's family, for she refers in one of her letters to "the impertinences of these Choiseuls."

Madame de Marsan was the sister of the Duc de Soubise, and a kinswoman of the De Rohans. She was highly esteemed at Court for her austere religion and virtue; she is said to have had a little of the blood and temper of the De Marsan famous for his persecutions in the time of the *dragonnades*. The inheritance made her an active agent of the Jesuits against Choiseul. For this, indeed, her political ability fitted her. She was governess to the children of France, and the little princesses under her charge were models of docility and decorum, such as French princesses ought to have been. And each sought to enter a convent at the age of eighteen. Contrasted with them, Marie Antoinette filled Madame de Marsan with displeasure and aversion. The old woman suspected and condemned everything the young girl did, and Marie Antoinette sought to revenge herself, girl fashion. Madame de Marsan was a formidable foe, and the feud was never healed.

Madame de Noailles held the office of the Dauphiness's *dame d'honneur*, having been set over her to teach her discretion and the way she should go—according to courtly precedent. But we have it under De Mercy's hand that the noble *duenna*, conscientious in her punctiliousness, and apparently

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attached to her heedless princess, did not know how to depart so far from her *rôle* of female courtier as to refrain from flattery, or to refuse, on the authority of her position, to consent to demands the gratification of which was not good for a Queen in training. At the same time the exemplary *grande dame* of the gallant veteran of Fontenoy was punctilio personified. Marie Antoinette called her "Madame Etiquette," and when the girl, in one of her donkey rides in the forest glades, had a fall, she sat still on the sandy ground, and laughingly refused to move till some of the lackeys should fetch Madame de Noailles to tell her the rule for a future Queen of France's getting up after a tumble from a donkey.

Nothing can be more pathetic than these far-off familiar records of Marie Antoinette's early days in France, read in the light of later years. The chronicle is that of the doings of a bright, thoughtless young girl—more, indeed, of a child than a girl—on ground mined in every direction, full of ambushes laid with a subtlety and persistency which were in marked contrast to the guilelessness and rashness of the victim. And that shade of old strait and strict state, and high and narrow dignity—how hard it is to conceive of it as linked with awful tragedy! How far removed seems the Madame de Noailles, the butt of girlish frolic and petulance, in these idle luxurious times at Versailles and Marly, Fontainebleau and Choisy-le-Roi, from the

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Maréchale de Mouchy, who, more than twenty years later, joined her brave husband—all honour to both for their faithful loyalty, in striving to testify, during the gloomiest days of the revolution, the venerable couple's unalterable devotion to their unhappy sovereigns. The Maréchal stayed with the King during the whole of the 20th of June, and was at Versailles as late as the 10th of August. On another June morning, in "the terror" of the year following that in which both the King and Queen were guillotined, their aged servants, the Duc and Duchess de Mouchy, formerly the Comte and Comtesse de Noailles, mounted the scaffold, and laid their white heads on the block.

A new and welcome element was introduced into the Dauphiness's life by the marriage, in succession, of the Dauphin's two brothers—the Comtes de Provence and d'Artois—at as early an age as the Dauphin had married, to two young Italian sisters, princesses of Piedmont. We do not require to listen to the half-malicious, half-affectionate satisfaction with which the Comte de Mercy was quick to point out the inferiority of the Sardinian sisters to his Archduchess in writing to her mother. We know they proved no rivals to Marie Antoinette. They were more like the old colourless, characterless Queens of France. In person, they were both very thin, and in the case of the Comtesse d'Artois, small to dwarfishness.

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The Comtesse de Provence had not a good point in her face, except her eyes. The Comtesse d'Artois had a white skin and a delicate colour; but she had a very long nose and a large mouth. The sisters spoke not at all in public, and not much in private, except to their intimate friends. The strangers did not even warm to each other, and it was said there had been little cordiality between them in their Turin life.

The nature of the double-dealing, envious Comte de Provence was curiously reflected in that of the cunning, jealous Comtesse, of whom it has been said that she was Italian all over.

Madame d'Artois was the more childish and mindless of the sisters; she was the less deceitful, while she could be guilty of the petted behaviour of a spoilt child. After she had been years at the French Court, she still spoke the language of her adopted country in the most deplorable manner. She became the exultant mother of children, while the Dauphiness and the Comtesse de Provence, to their keen disappointment, continued childless; but the advantage of being regarded for three or four years as the mother of the probable heir to the throne, did not win the smallest popularity for the unattractive little Comtesse. It would have required a person of much more mind and character than the Piedmontese princess possessed, to restrain the head-

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strong, racketting young prince, fast ripening in folly and prodigality.

Marie Antoinette had pined for fit company of her own age, and all the uncongeniality between her and her sisters-in-law did not come out in a day. The Dauphiness welcomed the Comtesse de Provence and the Comtesse d'Artois with her frank friendliness, and for a time the increase of privileged young people brought a corresponding increase of sociality and animation in what was apt to be, to the princes and princesses, the deadly liveliness of the Court of the *blasé* old king. The young couples were much in each other's rooms, and did a great deal in common, dancing at each other's early balls, and singing at each other's concerts. In fact, the three couples were reproached with forming a juvenile cabal; forsaking the gatherings of older great folks, and rendering themselves obnoxious by youthful scorn of their seniors' slow ways and heavy amusements.

It was during this short interlude that the Court theatricals, which had fallen to some extent into disuse as the rival of the everlasting card-tables, and had been revived to please the Dauphiness, became merged, for these insubordinate sprouts of royalty, into private theatricals, in which Marie Antoinette and the Sardinian princesses, with their princes, acted parts, while the Dauphin played the only spectator. The chief attraction of these little per-

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formances was nearly allied to the charm of forbidden fruit. Though they were perfectly innocent, unless on the ground of waste of time and saucy evasion of certain royal responsibilities and duties, the dramatic scenes were given in the private apartments with the utmost secrecy, as if they had been so much state treason.

It may be the little family plays were one of the *ruses* employed by Marie Antoinette to wile her Dauphin from the unprincely, though not unmanly occupations with which he was varying his assiduous hunting. A letter from Mercy to Maria Theresa, of this date, alludes to the Dauphiness's vexation at the Dauphin's strange habit of withdrawing and working with his hands at various kinds of mechanical contrivances—lock-making and masonry, the last including the lifting of large stones, which exhausted his strength. After all, Louis's *penchant* for trying a working-man's experience is not unheard-of among young lads of all ranks—witness the number of amateur Robinson Crusoes—and it was surely less despicable than his grandfather's ebony embroidery frame, and silver pots and pannikins. The Empress and Mercy agreed that the only cure for this erratic inclination was, not to thwart the prince violently, or remonstrate with him harshly, but to procure for him other more attractive and suitable amusements. The theatre was to Marie Antoinette what it had

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been to her father. She had seen her brothers and sisters act, and she herself was always fond of acting; but we do not elsewhere find her craving to play in the closest privacy. Such an element was more in accordance with the Dauphin's character than with her nature.

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CHAPTER V.

MORE LIGHTS AND SHADOWS IN THE DAUPHINESS'S LIFE.

THE behaviour of the Dauphin and Dauphiness towards each other reads very like the proceedings of a pair of children playing at being man and wife. Sometimes the play was absurd; sometimes it might have moved the hardest heart. There can be no question that the silent, shy, gruff lad liked in his own way his winning and vivacious partner. He let her call him to order, and give herself small wifely airs. Now, it was a dish of pastry, which she sent off the supper table because he had made himself ill by eating too heartily of some description of pie or tart the previous evening. One would call it a boyish weakness, which clung to him throughout life, but for the reminder in the histories of the great Emperor, Charles V., and his son, Philip II. of Spain, that an inordinate appetite for pastry has figured more than once among the minor vices of kings. Again, it was the Dauphin's violent riding and absorption in

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hunting, which made him unpunctual, too tired to care for anything else afterwards, and generally loutish in his conduct, that provoked from Marie Antoinette a lecture on his want of attention to her, in keeping her waiting for his arrival, or in withdrawing himself altogether from her amusements.

She dauntlessly parted him and his brothers when their quarrels had reached the length of blows (it must be remembered the princes were very young, ill-nurtured lads), because one brother had teased the other by idly lashing him with a string, or the Dauphin had insisted on handling a pet piece of china belonging to the Comte de Provence, until the *gauche* fingers dropped it, and it was broken in fragments. On the last occasion, Marie Antoinette scolded the offender so vehemently, and reproached him so cuttingly, that he burst into tears, when she cried herself, and the two kissed, and were better friends than ever. She followed her own sensible, kindly instincts in inducing her husband to answer the addresses of public deputations, and in herself speaking, with pretty dignity, a few pleasant words of thanks for the references to the Dauphiness in the addresses. When the King reviewed the troops, Marie Antoinette persuaded the Dauphin to ride at the head of his regiment, remembering, it may be, how proud her mother had been to see her boyish archdukes—Joseph and Karl—lead their soldiers as

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they marched through the streets of Presburg. The Dauphiness joined her husband, chatted with his officers, presented them with her tokens—white cockades—fastening the first cockade on the breast of her prince.

It goes to one's heart to read of the girl-wife confiding to Mercy, with a kind of premature wisdom and feeling, that she was content with her husband—that all his little surface defects proceeded from his bad education; but that at bottom he was good—"the best child with the best character" were her very words, the Comte wrote to her mother.

The chief variety in the irksome monotony and restraint of Court life was afforded by the circumstance that the King and his company passed, during the summer season especially, from one to another of the royal residences clustered round Paris. Not only Compiègne, Fontainebleau, and Versailles were in request, but the *recherché* splendour and elegance of many smaller palaces and hunting lodges, which for the most part perished in the wreck of royalty, and exist only as names—Choisy-le-Roi, Bellevue, La Muette, Marly. A special uniform for the suite belonged to each residence—at Compiègne, green; at Choisy, blue, &c., &c. The hunting-dress was *gros-bleu*, braided with gold. The arrangement of the braid indicated the kind of animal to be hunted. The establishment at Marly was the most charac-

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teristic of a despotic, luxurious monarchy, aiming at almost oriental fantasticalness and magnificence. There *le roi soleil* had erected the pavilion of the sun, surrounded by the twelve pavilions of the signs of the zodiac. Next to its pavilions and fresco-paintings, Marly was famous for its fountains, springing out of marble basins, and rising to the height of its grand trees. The Court had not dwelt at the Tuileries in the sight of the citizens of Paris since Louis XV. had been disgusted by riots in his capital; and the French kings had not gone far a-field for many a day. They had occasionally departed on warlike campaigns in quest of glory, but the features and resources of their own fair country, not to say the grievances and wrongs of their subjects, were utterly strange to them. Green Normandy, sunny Provence, the volcanic mountains of Auvergne, were alike unknown to their masters; still it was something not to be entirely stationary in that stiff and gagged routine of hunting, mass-attending, and card-playing, with its ugly reverse side of orgies and outrages. One palace or one forest was not quite like another. The costumes and codes of manners differed, so far, for each. In one, the ceremonial was relaxed till there was an approach to rustic ease and gaiety; in another, a little open air got into the talk in the Œil-de-Bœuf, and thence into the royal apartments. The gossip was not quite made up

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of domestic wrangling, petty jealousies, and ignoble intrigues.

To Marie Antoinette, with her unquenched spirits and her unclouded vision, there was still a good deal of pleasure and amusement in the round. She rode or drove in her *calêche* with Mesdames to the royal hunts, and was sometimes in at the death of the stag. In her frank good-nature she carried refreshments in her carriage, and delighted in dispensing them to the tired hunters, who clustered round, proud to be ministered to by the Dauphiness. But this was a performance for which she got into a little disgrace, no account of its unconventionality, and the encouragement it afforded to unwarrantable encroachments on the state of the first lady in the land. With a less objectionable consideration for her neighbours which was very like her mother's ways, she declined to avail herself of the certainty of a good place in the field, at the expense of the growing corn through which she must have driven, to the loss of the peasant proprietor. She turned back, that her coachman might be with his wife in her hour of need and danger. When one of the Dauphiness's servants was accidentally hurt, she immediately alighted, hurried to the aid of the wounded man, and showed the utmost anxiety for his welfare. The best bit of the story—which, after all, only points to a young creature not hardened to heartlessness, or incapable of obeying a

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humane impulse—is the *empressement* with which she narrated the adventure in the Court circle afterwards. She dwelt on the speed with which she had procured volunteers to run the necessary errands by calling the messengers her friends. "I addressed them all as *mes amis*," she exclaimed, with keen satisfaction in the means she had adopted and the success she had achieved. Acts of personal benevolence were not the only tokens that Marie Antoinette had inherited her mother's generous devotion to the poor. She was from the first, in her gay girlhood, punctual and liberal in her charities. In the succession of hard winters which befell France about this time, obelisks of ice and snow-statues erected in honour of the Dauphin and Dauphiness—and, later, of the young King and Queen—attested the people's gratitude for the benefits bestowed on them. Yet the Dauphiness of France was by no means a rich woman. The income allowed to her was so encumbered with pensions to the servants of the late Queen, and other charges, that it barely sufficed for her inevitable expenses. Had it not been for the moderate sum of money placed by Maria Theresa in the hands of Mercy for her daughter's use, with the characteristic injunction not to let Marie Antoinette know the amount, the princess would have been without the means of meeting claims outside the Dauphiness's official disbursements.

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Marie Antoinette had ardently desired to see her capital under any circumstances, and at last her public entrance into Paris took place. It was a very grand and very gallant gala, with crowds of holiday-makers, and showers of enthusiastic compliments, as the *Gazette de France* for the day still testifies. The Dauphin and Dauphiness, with a great train, were received at the gates by the Governor, the Maréchal de Brissac, and all the city authorities. The guests filled six state carriages, in which royalty visited in turn the cathedral of Notre Dame and the church of the city's patroness, St. Gêneviève, and then the Tuileries. The company were met and escorted by troops of soldiers. The holy mother of the Hospital of the Hotel de Dieu, with her nuns, walked in the procession. So did the heads of the Mint, of the chief Law-Courts, and the Universities, with their followers. There was a royal festival at the Tuileries, in which a curious feature appeared. At the tables laid for three hundred guests who were to share in the city's hospitalities to its future sovereigns, the fellow-feasters with the Dauphin and Dauphiness were not only of one sex, according to Court rule; they were to a large extent, by one of the startling anomalies which so often meet us at the time, and break upon us like signs of lingering barbarism and warning notes of trouble to come, the fish-women of the Halle, to which these and other potent market-dames had just made the Dauphiness

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free. By immemorial custom, the *poissardes* claimed and vindicated the claim to extraordinary privileges, where the royal family were concerned.

After the feast, the young couple walked in the summer gardens, and showed themselves on the terrace, from which they "saluted with the hand" their shouting subjects below. Everyone knows the high-flown answer of the Governor to the eager cry of Marie Antoinette, "Good Heavens, what a crowd!"—"Madame, if it will not displease Monsieur the Dauphin, these are so many lovers who gaze at you." In fact, she won golden opinions on all sides by her youth, her beauty, her lively grace of manner—which proceeded, in part at least, from her anxiety to gratify all around her—and her enchantment with her reception. On that June day the Maréchal was right: there was not a better or more widely-loved woman in France.

In 1774, an old acquaintance from Vienna appeared in Paris, and claimed Marie Antoinette's support, which she gave with all her heart—not the less so, perhaps, that Madame du Barry, with her usual insolent defiance of the Dauphiness, exerted all her influence against Marie Antoinette's former music-master. In spite of Court intrigues and some Court prejudices, Ritter Gluck's *Iphigénie en Aulide* was a great success. Marie Antoinette was present at the representation, with her Dauphin and many members

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of the Court. What memories the stately music must have recalled to the young princess, sitting there in her state to honour her old teacher, of those neglected lessons at Schönbrunn, of Joseph's marriage to poor slighted Josepha of Bavaria, with the imperial family opera and ballet, in which twinkling little feet had danced nimbly, and Maria Theresa had smiled, and the Kaiser had clapped his hands at the skipping of his darling; of the sombre, pathetic melodies of *Orpheus et Eurydice* given at the Court theatre, when another Josepha, the gentle, lovely Archduchess, was the bride in the old Burg, on the eve of her fatal illness.

It was at this season that Marie Antoinette made the impression on Edmund Burke which was never effaced. As he recalled it in other times, he could find no calmer words than those which compared her to "the morning star, full of life, and splendour, and joy."

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CHAPTER VI.

THE STOPPING OF THE CLOCK OVER THE BALCONY IN THE MARBLE COURT AT VERSAILLES.

IN the Lent of 1774, Beauvais, Bishop of Senez, preached before the King and the Court a memorable sermon, on the text, "Yet forty days and Nineveh shall be overthrown;" likening brilliant, depraved, suffering Paris to Nineveh of old, and calling on high and low to prepare for the judgment to come.

The events which followed made the sermon notable among sermons. Louis XV. was an aged man at sixty-four, aged by his long reign of fifty-nine years, still more aged by the vice which had subdued and corrupted him to the core, and crushed and slain natural human feeling. Within the forty days cited by the preacher he was attacked by illness, and the illness was pronounced small-pox, the deadliest disease of the time. The utmost consternation prevailed at Versailles. Royal kindred, ministers, courtiers, priests, and the favourite whose day of shameful power was closing with the failing breath of

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the sick man, jostled each other in inextricable confusion. Death approached unmistakably. Madame du Barry was sent off in one of the carriages of her ally, the Duc d'Aiguillon, whose triumphs were also at their last ebb, and the King's confessor stepped forward. Mesdames made their final and honourable effort to vindicate their rights as the king's daughters by taking up their post in the sick-room, where the power of the contagion was terrible, and the loathsomeness of the disease, with such a victim, frightful.

When the danger was at its worst, and night was falling, the Dauphin and Dauphiness, with their brothers and sisters, assembled in the chapel to recite before the holy sacrament the prayers of the Forty Hours, while a violent storm of thunder and lightning raged round the palace. Body-guards, pages, and squires stood booted and spurred, prepared to start forth with the expected tidings that would make Europe ring. Travelling carriages were drawn up, ready for the journey which a still longer journey was to precede. The signal fixed upon was the extinguishing of a light in a certain window; but the King survived the night, and died in the full day of a May afternoon. The clock over the balcony of the marble court had its hand stopped at three, according to the old French custom, which dealt with the hour as if time were no more, and

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the world had come to an end, because the King was dead.

In trembling anticipation of the event, the young couple of twenty and nineteen stood together in a distant room. A rumbling noise, like that of another thunderstorm, broke upon the breathless stillness. It was the rushing feet of the courtiers flying to pay homage to their new sovereigns. Louis and Marie Antoinette sank upon their knees, and the ready tears flowed before the awe of the responsibility of a king and queen so young.

The Court left immediately for Choisy. The first carriage contained the King and Queen, his brothers and their wives. The second held Madame Clotilde and Madame Elizabeth. The third contained Mesdames.

For a little time the occupants of the first carriage remained shocked and sorrowful. But he who was gone had done little to awaken their reverence and regard. A fresh life was opening out before them. There was not only novelty, there was even a spice of adventure in their present expedition. An oddly framed speech from the silly little Comtesse d'Artois relaxed the tension of feeling, and sent the party from one hysterical extreme to another. The greater part of the royal boys and girls began to chatter and even to laugh as usual.

The body of the late King was hustled away with

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scant ceremony, and buried under cloud of night at St. Denis. Poor Mesdames took small-pox; but the disease assumed its mildest form.

Comte de Maurepas, an old friend of the late Dauphin, became, through the influence of Madame Adelaïde, Prime Minister, instead of Choiseul, whom Marie Antoinette would fain have seen promoted to the post. Maurepas showed himself personally the Queen's enemy, as much as so light-hearted an old gentleman could be anybody's enemy.

The King and Queen won golden opinions by resigning two personal privileges, for which the city of Paris must have been heavily taxed. The couple renounced the old compulsory gifts due to them under the names of *le joyeux avènement* and *la ceinture de la Reine*, the last in reference to the purses which formerly hung at the French queens' girdles. Louis and Marie Antoinette also distributed plentiful alms to the poor, as they were prone to do, and lowered the price of bread—a dangerous precedent.

But the examination of the late King's papers brought to his successor two severe shocks. A persuasion had long existed that Louis XV. kept in store a great treasure. This turned out, as might have been supposed, a delusion and a snare. Also, among the private letters were found, not only records of the secret spy system of diplomacy which had recommended itself to Louis XV., but incontro-

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vertible proofs of the treachery of the Comte and Comtesse de Provence to their brother and sister, their future king and queen. It had long been suspected that Monsieur, as Comte de Provence, in his literary ambition, was the author of some of the political squibs and sneering insinuations against the Dauphin and Dauphiness which had already appeared in the public prints. It was now seen that, in addition, he had addressed slanderous accusations against his kindred to his grandfather, and that the Comtesse de Provence, with her "highly arched, black brows," and her cautious tongue, had been actively concerned in the same baseness. The discovery put an end to all private friendship between the two brothers and their wives; and perhaps it furnished Louis XVI with a fresh motive for enabling Mesdames to form an independent establishment. He did so in the kindest manner. He presented them with the palace of Bellevue. There the middle-aged women became more harmless, and deserving of respect. This did not prevent Bellevue and the Carmelite convent being the scenes of a good deal of gossip and malicious innuendo against the Queen.

On the return of the King and Queen to Versailles, he took the rooms where the late King had died, resigning his rooms as Dauphin to Monsieur. Close at hand was *la Cour-des-Cerfs*, all its stories containing little rooms, which held geographical maps, models

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of vessels, an observatory, and a forge. The King's favourite walk, especially after breakfast, was on the leads or roof, because he was not disturbed there. He did not mind the inequalities produced by pipes, chimneys, &c., &c., because of the fine view, the pure air, and the opportunity of watching through his telescope all that went on in the town and avenues.

The Queen kept the rooms she had first occupied as Dauphiness, which were, indeed, the apartments of the late Queen. Fifteen princes and princesses had been born—two queens and two dauphinesses had died in them.

The princes of the blood had apartments at Versailles, but only came there on great days. Orleans lived at the Palais Royal, Condé at Chantilly, the Duc de Penthièvres at Sceaux.

The King's household numbered fourteen hundred officers, the Queen's four hundred and fifty. Unquestionably Marie Antoinette had some taste for the magnificence which surrounded her; but she soon wearied of it, and craved simpler manners and more freedom of private intercourse, like the life at Schönbrunn. Such inclinations were a scandal to the old courtiers of both sexes. They resented the most innocent, nay advisable changes, such as the Queen's dining with the King in public, the two moving together, or separately, from one place to another, without the restraint of a train of gentlemen or ladies.

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Another offence was the ladies dancing at the early balls, where the high rank of the guests was the sole distinction, in dominoes—white satin gowns, with short trains and wide sleeves—rather than in the enormous cumbrous hoops.

"You love flowers; I give you a bouquet of them," was Louis's gallant speech when he presented Marie Antoinette with the lovely little domain of Le Petit Trianon. Here was a charming toy for a charming grown-up child, and she was determined to fashion it according to the new notions floating about everywhere. Revolutionary ideas were rife, without being traced to their source and their sequel. The longing for the overthrow of rule, the passion for liberty,[1] were felt by those who did not stop to analyse their feelings, and from whom such rebellious inclinations would have seemed farthest removed. The young nobles were full of the new ideas of Voltaire and Rousseau—ignorant what these would lead to. The representatives of the houses of De Noailles, De Guéménée, De Durfort, De Coigny, De Gramont, De la Fayette figured as elegant democrats, aristocratic philosophers, showing themselves now in velvet and gold embroidered coats, now in the plain *fracs noirs* of the *bourgeoisie.* The young women of the *noblesse* became infected in turn, and did not content themselves with

[1] St. Amand.

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dressing one day like eastern queens and another like peasants. They grew enamoured of simplicity, which was *le grand simple* still. Their dignity yielded to graceful sentimentality—half real, half affected; stiff brocades gave place to flowing muslins, high-plumed head-dresses to low straw hats. The very names of the colours of robes and ribands were no longer confined to such stately compliments as that implied in *œil du Roi* and *cheveux de la reine;* terms waxed languishing or intense, as in *soupirs étouffés* and *plaintes amères.*

So the Queen decided that little Trianon, within a short walk of Versailles, should be a refuge from state cares and ceremonials. She did not love the old gardens, with their terraces and clipped yews. She would have an English garden of the day, with its thickets, rocks, waterfalls, and rustic bridges, such as Horace Walpole had made at Strawberry Hill, the Prince de Ligny at Bel-œil, the Marquis de Caraman at Roissy. The house itself was a small square pavilion, where neither the Queen nor anybody of consequence ever spent a night. One *salon* opened into the Hall of Freshness, with its two porticoes of trellis-work, and its thirty-six green arches formed of climbing plants. In the great *salon* hung pictures of the archdukes and archduchesses, including little Marie Antoinette performing in the famous family opera and ballet. In the retiring room, beyond the

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little *salon*, with its dainty blue silk hangings, its scarfs fringed with pearls knotting up the curtains, its bed disappearing under lace and white silk, was a very different row of portraits. These represented—by an extraordinary flight of fancy from the pride of life to its sombre end—the Queen's brothers and sisters as monks and nuns digging their graves. The likenesses of the King and Queen in robes of state hung in another room.

The works which Marie Antoinette began at Trianon, including her little theatre and her hamlet, lasted from 1774 to 1786. The cost was greatly exaggerated, but her whim had grown since she had thought of a place where she might saunter among her flower borders unmolested, where even at table she might throw to the King little balls of crumbs without scandalising *le service.*

Louis XVI.'s coronation was celebrated with great splendour, but Marie Antoinette was only there as a spectator.

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CHAPTER VII.

MARIE ANTOINETTE'S FRIENDS.

FIRST came the King. Unfortunately, he did not bear the slightest resemblance to the Queen in character and tastes, beyond the important fact that they were both honest-minded and kind-hearted. The King was a simple-natured, slow, methodical man, all of whose inclinations pointed to a quiet, regular, domestic life. The Queen was bright, quick, careless, fond of gaiety, and of the popularity and personal admiration which she had been trained to cultivate and value as sure means of influence and power.

When the Queen led a winter sledge-party, according to the Viennese fashion of her girlhood, Louis waved his hand to carts containing billets of wood, fuel for the poor, and said, "Mesdames and Messieurs, these are my sledges." When Marie Antoinette persuaded Louis to accompany her to a masqued ball at the opera, he professed that he was not amused, and came away early. He would not dance, even at the

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carnival balls, while she would be on the floor till seven o'clock in the morning.

When Marie Antoinette was the young, flattered, frolicsome Queen, she lent herself to the mischievous, not very becoming, trick of setting one of the time-pieces at Versailles half-an-hour in advance, so that the earliness of the King's bed-time, by which she was half-aggrieved, might be anticipated, and she could start sooner than would otherwise have happened for the sport she had in hand. It is also true that in a letter to an elderly Austrian diplomatist—an old friend of the imperial family at Vienna—of all people and places, Marie Antoinette once referred to her King, with jesting condescension, as *le pauvre homme.* For this last offence, which came under Maria Theresa's eye, the culprit was overwhelmed with reproaches, even though Mercy took pains to prove to the Empress that the idle expression was no more than a jesting French phrase, in common use, employed by the writer in the still girlish vanity which had been nettled into boasting of her clever exercise of her influence over her husband.

But Marie Antoinette was one of the most loyal of women. She had been brought up in absolute faith in kings. She had been taught to reverence even Louis XV., because his was a crowned head. Her husband's "divine right" alone would have secured her respect; but he had other claims which

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she did not refuse to acknowledge. The two had grown from boy and girl to man and woman in familiar companionship. She had always felt unbounded trust in his goodness. She might say that for years she did not know whether he cared for her or not, in the way of passionate love; but she had never doubted his faithful affection. He was her young husband who showed himself solicitous for her happiness, who could with difficulty deny her any petition, however unreasonable. Louis might provoke and weary Marie Antoinette the one moment, but she was full of compunction the next. She exulted over every fresh proof of her King's confidence and regard; she was full of triumph when she could drag him to any of her resorts. In place of desiring his absence, she welcomed him eagerly as her guest at Trianon. She learnt in time to accommodate herself to his tastes, and consult his wishes and convenience first, in forming her plans. She sought to be with him whenever she could. She constituted herself his ardent supporter and defender, as, for that matter, she had tried to do in her simple girlhood.

Monsieur and Madame (the Comte and Comtesse de Provence) desired to ingratiate themselves with the public by an ostentatious display of elaborate prudence of conduct and union of interests, in broad contrast to what were reckoned the disorders and

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divisions of the royal household. But though there was no open quarrel—in fact, Court routine required that the family should be often together—there could be no further intimacy. The King and Queen were thrown more on the Comte and Comtesse d'Artois. So far as the little Comtesse went, the association between her and Marie Antoinette was more apparent than real. But d'Artois proved an attractive brother to the Queen. Not more than eighteen years of age when his son, the Duc d'Angoulême was born, the young father was the delight of one half of Paris and the scandal of the other. Every new and lively movement which varied the formality and monotony of Court life, if it did not take its rise with the Queen, originated with him. Of his violence of temper, his insolence to inferiors, his fickleness and faithlessness —now that he had passed his boyhood—Marie Antoinette only saw examples by fits and starts, while she had but too much sympathy with his daring, his volatility, his *insouciance.* Unlike his brothers and sisters, he was slight, active, and rather handsome; he was a bold rider, a gay, unwearied dancer, a tolerable actor, a wild gambler. His boast that he would rebuild Bagatelle—his country-house in the Bois de Boulogne—in so many weeks, and his fulfilment of the pledge, was a damaging, yet dazzling achievement.

Soon after Marie Antoinette become Queen, she

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gratified one of those friendships which were passions with her, by appointing the Princesse de Lamballe to the post of superintendent of the palace. Marie[1] Thérèse Louise, Princesse de Lamballe, was born in 1749, and was thus six years older than the Queen. She was the daughter of an Italian father, Prince de Carignan, and a German mother. Her beauty and her character showed both Italian and German traits. Her hair of an Italian fairness—at once flaxen and golden, like that of the Virgins of Raphaël—curled softly—"curled still round the pike on that awful September day." She had a naïve air, innocent blue eyes, and a strain of melancholy (*morbedezza*) in her disposition.

She came to France, at seventeen years of age, to marry the only son of the amiable, enormously rich Duc de Penthièvres, the grandson of the *Roi Soleil*—Louis XIV., and Madame Montespan. The Prince de Lamballe was a wild, dissipated young man. He died when he was twenty-one, a year after his marriage, and his young widow mourned him, in French fashion, as if he had been a model of virtue; she became the good angel and consoler of her father-in-law, the Duc de Penthièvres.

Marie Antoinette was introduced to this gentle "cousin" on the very day of the Archduchess's arrival

[1] The greater part of the following sketches are free translations from the works of M. de St. Amand and MM. Goncourt.

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at Compiègne. But the friendship was really formed in the earliest of these sledge-drives, when the Queen's white horses, blue velvet harness, and gold and silver tinkling bells startled the Boulevards with a vision from fairyland, at which some applauded and some scowled. Almost rivalling the Queen's face in beauty was another young face rising above the wraps of martin and ermine, with the delicate complexion heightened by the snow-wind. At twenty-six, the age of the Princesse de Lamballe when she received her appointment, the charm of her beauty and her character belonged to the tender grace and sweetness of a young girl. Not a breath of slander ever sullied her spotless reputation. Like her father-in-law, she gave largely to the poor. Her health was delicate, and she suffered from fainting fits. The Princesse de Lamballe was not an over-wise woman, as Mercy constantly complained. She had nothing to desire for herself; but after the fashion of her friend, the Queen, the Princess became the mouth-piece of her allies and clients, for whom she solicited *recommendations* with as much mild pertinacity as if she had been the most inveterate place-hunter on her own account. Her romantic attachment to her unworthy husband's memory knit her closely to his sister, the good-natured, popular Duchess of Orleans, and, through her, to the whole Orleans faction.

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When Marie Antoinette's favour began to be withdrawn from the Princess, and bestowed in another quarter, the slighted woman's feelings, still more than her ambition, were hurt. While her dignity and meekness alike prevented her from indulging in angry recriminations, if Mercy is to be trusted, she did not refrain from plaintive *exigeantes* reproaches. One can imagine that these must have become wearisome to Marie Antoinette—the more so that her kindness of heart would not allow her to shake off the incubus, and her conscience could not entirely acquit her of having made professions and encouraged expectations which she had failed to fulfil. Perhaps it is not to be wondered at that a man of the world like Mercy protested at the silliness of the Princesse de Lamballe, and that a woman like Madame de Genlis could only see what was weak and ridiculous in the simple piety, nobility, and goodness so far removed from the scheming, not too honourable or honest woman of mere intellect and Rousseau sentimentality. But there was the soul of self-sacrifice and fidelity to death in the fragile body "that grew bold in the tempest." When the Princess heard of the straits of her mistress, she said, "I must set out immediately," and went to shut herself up again with the royal family in the Tuileries. She hurried back to her post of danger. She left the safe shelter she had found with her kindred in Piedmont, and did indeed throw

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herself, in spite of the Queen's warning, "into the tiger's jaws."

What shall we say of the Princesse de Lamballe's successful rival—of Madame de Polignac, who cost her country, according to Mirabeau, millions of francs, and went far in causing streams of innocent blood to flow? English imaginations have been busy in conjuring up this harpy. What was she really like? Another mild, delicate woman, of simple tastes, in herself apparently perfectly inoffensive and singularly winning. She came to the front first in the *fêtes* on the coronation, being introduced at court by her unmarried sister-in-law, the ugly, witty Comtesse Diane de Polignac, who had received a post in the household of the Comtesse d'Artois.[1] Marie Antoinette was attracted by Madame de Polignac's singing. The Comtesse's set, and especially her own family, were musical, and the Queen loved music; they could furnish fair actors, and the Queen had a passion for private theatricals. The Polignacs were of the old *noblesse*, but had been poor, and accustomed to live in their province with the greatest well-bred frugality. Madame had borne the maiden name of Gabrielle Yolande Claude Martine de Polastron. She,

[1] Comtesse Diane's influential position, in the light of an unmarried woman not in a convent, was an anomaly in the French social life of the time; not so her devotion to the interests of her family, especially her brother's family. The King gave her the brevet rank of *dame*.

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too, was born in 1749, and was also six years the Queen's senior—a charming woman of twenty-five at the date of the coronation. She had married, in 1767, at the age of eighteen, a well-descended but poor officer, Comte Jules de Polignac. He was reckoned a man of honour, whose tastes and habits inclined to a peaceful life not out of keeping with his moderate income. Theirs was one of the *mariages de convenance*, where a union of interests was all the union contemplated and accomplished—a polite, friendly indifference the quality most cultivated and prized. The husband and wife were free to go their several ways, and to form other and closer friendships. That all *mariages de convenance* did not result in such worse than hollow relations goes without saying, even amidst the cynical worldliness of Paris. Everybody had laughed and cried over the sweet, sad story of the Maréchal de Moy and the Canoness of Neuss. Down in the provinces especially there were, among the great *seigneurie*, wedded lives in which every domestic virtue flourished in a kind of patriarchal simplicity. But it was not so with Comte and Comtesse Jules.

The Queen began by bestowing on Madame de Polignac the title of friend, with as much money as might enable her to live economically in the *Hôtel Fortisson, Rue de Bons Enfants*, Versailles—the Comtesse protesting all the while that she wanted

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nothing; was grateful for the Queen's kindness, but feared the expense of living at Court, and would prefer to return with her husband and child to her estate of Claye. Then the King, to please the Queen, appointed Comte Jules first equerry to the Queen, with from sixty to eighty thousand livres a-year, and lodgings in Paris, at Compiègne, Versailles, and Fontainebleau; whereupon Comte and Comtesse Jules removed to the palace, to a suite of apartments at the top of the marble staircase.

All her contemporaries acknowledge Madame de Polignac's beauty. Some say she was the prettiest woman of her time. A vivid remembrance of her face lingers still in men's minds—"angelic, in the fashion of the brown angels of Italy, who are not angels, but Cupids," a high forehead, nose slightly tip-tilted, a fresh complexion, fine white teeth, superb brown hair, an enchanting smile—an elegant little person. If she had limped slightly, she would have been like Louise de la Vallière. She was hardly ever seen with diamonds, if she could help it. Why should she, when she knew how to produce an equal effect in white muslin, with a rose in her hair? Her easy gait was without a particle of pride or vanity. She possessed in perfection the French art of pleasing.

Madame de Polignac's character is said to have been like her face, amiable and unassuming. She

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loved the country, nature, retirement; she impressed those around her with her modesty and disinterestedness, so that people protested there never had been a favourite less greedy and less egotistical.[1] The only attraction that filled her heart was that of her family and friends. She looked forward to the end of her Court favour with philosophy, as that which would restore her to them. She showed herself good and compassionate to the unfortunate. Her eyes would fill with tears on hearing of the sufferings of others. Madame de Polignac's information was not extensive, her wit not remarkable. Mercy was disposed to regard her disdainfully as a trifling little woman, with whom the Queen wasted a great deal too much time. But the statesman underrated the power of Comtesse Jules. She had an irresistible fascination for Marie Antoinette, while the attitude of quietness and coyness which Madame at all times preserved piqued the ardour of the Queen. Yet it was the woman rather than the Queen who constantly craved for that sweetness and fulness of friendship which she might taste with such a lovable, unpretending soul. In addition, there was a repose about the benevolent, unconscious, almost cool young woman, which Marie Antoinette could never hope to find in the tender, single-hearted, self-conscious, and self-tormenting Princesse de Lamballe.

[1] MM. Tilly and De Ségur—Mesdames Campan and Vigée-Lebrun.

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We have come to the grand question—Was this tranquil, amiable, not particularly high-principled little person the perfection of nature or of art? Perhaps the truth lay between the two. There can be no doubt that devotion to an object in the Polignac circle—the centre of which was a woman who neither cared for great wealth nor the opportunity of ruling—procured for her, in spite of herself, large grants of money, the *tabouret* of a *duchesse*, the post of Governess to the Children of France; while for her friends, the same concentration of purpose obtained the creation of marshals, the appointment of ambassadors, the nomination to innumerable inferior offices.

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CHAPTER VIII.

THE QUEEN'S COMPANIONS.

THE Queen met the same company constantly, not only by themselves in Comtesse Jules's *salon*, but amidst a crowd, whom the Comte de Mercy classed severely as the most foolish and reckless of the youth of Paris, in the apartments of the Princesse de Guéménée. She had succeeded Madame de Marsan in the permanent office of Governess to the Children of France, and her position entitled her to "receive" for the Queen—that is, to be at home to the world which the Queen might choose to join. Of the men of the circle, the best was the Prince de Ligny, the worst the Baron de Besenval and the Duc de Lauzun, who, to be sure, only visited it as a passing meteor.

The Prince de Ligny, who lived to be Marie Antoinette's generous defender, was twenty years her senior, having been born in 1735. He was Belgian by birth, a Spanish grandee by descent, Austrian by nationality, and French by habits and tastes. He

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had enjoyed alike the maternal kindness of Maria Theresa and the friendship of Frederic the Second of Prussia. Madame de Staël praised him with enthusiasm, saying he gave life to everything because he put art in nothing. He was one of those men who are far better than their creeds, or who, disgusted with the hypocrisy of the world, make a profession immensely inferior to their practice. He affected to regret the time of Louis XV., when men and women, if they were not all virtuous, were all agreeable, and, strange climax, full of respect and regard for each other—stranger climax still, when they left atheism to academies and ante-chambers. And he was kind to everybody. His levity was more apparent than real; it hid treasures of devotedness and high-mindedness. Intrepid in battle, brilliant *en fête*, gay at the supper-table, in private, gentle and feeling, with good sense at the core of his amiability, and a humourist's mixture of amusement at and compassion for humanity, the Prince de Ligny lived on familiar terms—which meant no disrespect—with the King and Queen.

One blow darkened the sunny nature, the death of a gallant son, fighting at Boux. But the old man preserved much of his charm to the close of his eighty years, in 1814. In his small house at Vienna, or in his "Refuge" at Leopoldsberg, he recalled, without ceasing, Versailles and Trianon. His sayings

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and writings have enlisted new defenders of Marie Antoinette, among them the great critic, St. Beuve. He tells in his turn how the Prince delineated with an inimitable touch the Queen's early private walks and rides, when she ravished all hearts; how he dwelt on her artlessness, her "innocent imprudence."

Hear De Ligny's honourable, weighty testimony. "There was never any of us who had the good fortune of seeing her daily, that would have dared to abuse the intercourse by causing her the slightest inconvenience. She played the Queen without suspecting it; we adored her without thinking of loving her." He was mistaken in the first of his conclusions, but *he* was never the offender, though he was on such intimate terms with his royal countrywoman as to set snares to provoke her merry laughter.

The Baron de Besenval was a man of fifty, whose whitened hair did not interfere with his pretensions to youthful gallantry. His family, though in the last generation Swiss, came from Savoy originally, and his mother was a Pole, a kinswoman of Maria Leczinska's. Besenval was lieutenant-colonel of the Swiss Guards, and so brought into close contact with the Court. He was a rich bachelor, throwing away money upon beautiful things—pictures, statues, bronzes, Bacchantes in white marble. He was a man of the camp as well as of the court, believing in his star, irascible, violent,

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but knowing when to command himself. He assumed *bonhomie* and the bluntness of a Helvetic Cincinnatus, while he preserved the perfect elegance of a man of the world, and the irreproachable politeness of a grand seigneur. Besenval had a fine marked profile, a well-shaped nose, a small mouth. He was full of insolent grace, stood disdainfully, his hands in his pockets, content with himself, ready to laugh at others.

The Baron de Besenval wrote his memoirs, self-sufficient and unscrupulous as the man himself. His tone in reference to Marie Antoinette is *aigre-douce.* He lets fall a cowardly, base insinuation on the slightest grounds. It was known that his Court favour had suddenly diminished, and only sustained a modified revival. Madame Campan gives an explanation. On a solitary occasion, when the two, Marie Antoinette and the officer, were alone together, the Baron de Besenval was guilty of the insolence of making love to the Queen, who grew furious, and ordered him out of her presence. But certain that he would not dare to repeat the offence, and unwilling to cause an *esclandre*, she refrained from telling the King, as she had threatened to do, and permitted Besenval, in appearance, to regain something of the old friendly footing, since his position in the Swiss Guards brought him constantly to Court.

Besenval did not survive to perish with his regiment. He died in Paris in 1791.

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Armand Louis de Gontant Biron, Duc de Lauzun, was born in 1747, and thus was eight years older than the Queen. He had been reared in the boudoir of Madame de Pompadour, and on account of a difficulty in choosing a tutor for him, a lackey of his late mother's taught him to read. At twelve years of age, he too entered the regiment of the Swiss Guards, knowing that he would succeed to an immense fortune. At nineteen, he married a charming young girl, grand-daughter and heiress of the Maréchal de Luxembourg. Her graces and virtues won all hearts except her husband's. He came to Versailles when he was twenty-eight years of age, and found the Queen on intimate terms with his friend the Princesse de Guéménée, who procured him the introduction which he coveted, and he received some kindness from Marie Antoinette. A race, in which his horse was ridden by a child, made him fashionable; and at the Queen's request, other races were arranged.

Lauzun was a French Lovelace, an avowed woman-killer, with all the immoderate vanity and odious heartlessness of such a character. He ran after those women who were much in the public eye—*grandes dames*, famous beauties, celebrated actresses. To throw on queens themselves bold looks—to make the proudest hearts beat, were it only with indignation—to cause the most glorious eyes to shine, if but

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with anger—to excite the jealousy of the *salon*, the envy of the men, the ecstacy of the women, was his chief ambition. And this very fine gentleman had the weaknesses of a fine lady, and carried them off admirably. He could weep ostentatiously, without looking ridiculous; he changed colour like the Comtesse Diane, who had an inconvenient habit of blushing like a school-girl; he even fainted when it was desirable to produce a sensation.

Marie Antoinette had no great liking for Lauzun, yet she regarded his vices with a certain foolish interest and curiosity—feelings which such *mauvais sujets*, as she knew him to be, are apt to excite in women like her. Mercy wrote of him as one of the dangerous young fools to whom the Queen gave too free access; but the Comte added no hint that could support the outrageous fatuousness of the Duc de Lauzun's assertion of the Queen's favour.

Lauzun, on his part, had no special regard for Marie Antoinette; but the *rôle* of admirer of the first woman in France pleased his coxcombry, and, as he fancied, mortified *les grandes dames*.

Suddenly a lively sensation was excited at Court by the incident of "the heron's plume," told in two very different ways. One day Lauzun appeared at Madame de Guéménée's in uniform, with a snow-white heron's plume in his casque. Some evenings

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afterwards, the Queen showed herself with the same unique plume in her head-dress.

Lauzun's vapouring statement was, that the Queen had said to Madame de Guéménée that she, Marie Antoinette, was dying to have the heron's feathers, which he sent to her accordingly through his obliging ally. The Queen, he added, not only wore the plume, but appealed to him as to what he thought of it in her head-dress, and declared she had never found herself adorned so much to her mind. The Duc de Lauzun then wrote down a cock-and-bull version of an interview he had with the Queen, when she insinuated her attachment to him, and, but for the restraint he put upon himself, would have expressed her regard openly.

Madame Campan's explanation has the merit of being credible. The Queen had rashly admired the rare plume, when the Duc de Lauzun at once offered it to her through Madame de Guéménée. The offer embarrassed Marie Antoinette, who did not see how she could refuse it, or accept it without presenting Lauzun with an equivalent—a course to which there were many objections. On the whole, it seemed the best plan to take the feathers as a matter of course, let their former owner see her wear them once, and then suffer the subject to drop. But her imprudent condescension to such a man bore its natural fruits. The Duc de Lauzun solicited an audience, and

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Madame Campan, who was in the next room in the performance of her duty, again heard the Queen's voice raised in anger. "Go, sir," were the words she said this time, and when her dismissal was obeyed, she protested to her bed-chamber woman, "That man shall never again come within my doors." As an established fact, the Queen from that date testified her displeasure and dissatisfaction with the nobleman. When the Maréchal de Biron died, the Duc de Lauzun, the heir of his name, desired the post of colonel of the French Guards, but the Queen prevented his nomination, procuring the commission for the Duc de Châtelet. For that matter, Lauzun had been unmasked to her by Mercy and the Abbé as early as 1777. Lauzun was overwhelmed with debt, in consequence of his reckless life and prodigal extravagance; though he had started with a hundred thousand crowns rent, he owed two millions. Madame de Guéménée importuned Marie Antoinette in vain for *lettres d'état*, to save the spendthrift from his creditors. It is equally well known that the disappointment of his unwarrantable expectations threw the Duc de Lauzun into the faction of the Duc d'Orleans, and converted the Queen's pretended admirer into a bitter enemy both of her and the King.

But, first, a few words to throw light on these audacious invasions of the dignity of the woman and

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Queen. Marie Antoinette was a young woman—beautiful, thoughtless, and leading a life gay to dissipation. It is saying little to note that she had many enemies. She had managed to pique and alienate some of the representatives of the greatest houses in the kingdom—such as "the Montmorencies, the Clermont-Tonnerres, the Rochefoucaulds"—by the constant injudicious display of her preference for her private friends; above all, for Madame de Polignac and her set—a line of conduct against which Mercy had warned the Queen to no purpose. For some time, as her old friend and adviser had not failed to point out, her weekly balls, when the Court was at Versailles, had been ominously ill-attended. The great families did not care to come from Paris and find the Queen so engrossed by a bevy of favourites and her own amusement as hardly to take the trouble, in spite of her naturally gracious manners, to "hold a circle," and take due notice of her guests. Besides, these offended magnates were by no means without skeletons in their own cupboards, and felt further insulted by some painfully honest speeches of the young Queen's, such as, "I do not care to receive wives who are separated from their husbands."

There is no question that the first calumnies against the Queen arose in the *salons*, and tempted every unworthy fine gentleman, who listened to the sneers and *doubles entendres*, and believed in them, to profess

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insolently to appropriate Marie Antoinette's frank smiles and ready kindness.

The Duc de Lauzun fought well in La Vendée against the defenders of the altar and the throne; but his comrades could not forget or forgive his birth and assumption of superiority. He was guillotined on the 1st of January, 1794. It is said that on the scaffold he declared, "I have been false to my God, to my order, and to my King." The Duc de Lauzun, like the Baron de Besenval, left behind him memoirs, the authenticity of which, though at first questioned with indignation by his greatest friend, Talleyrand, is now universally admitted. The only testimony against the good name of Marie Antoinette which could be for a moment entertained by any reasonable person, is contained in the malicious inferences and vindictively-garbled statements of these two noble braggarts, who proclaimed to the world what, if true, it would have been the height of treachery in them to reveal, but which, as it is, bears its foolish falsehood on its brazen face.[1]

Marie Antoinette's familiarity with the company which she met in the *salons* of the Comtesse Jules and the Princesse de Guéménée was a great error, and a clear source of misfortune to her. Already, as a young girl in the corrupt Court of Louis XV., she

[1] "*Les médisances, les calomnies, les erreurs grossières* De Besenval, De Lauzun, et De Soulaire."—MM. D'ARNETTE ET GEFFROY.

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had seen shameless vice tolerated and condoned from the lowest motives of self-interest and expediency. The instincts of her higher nature, together with her earlier training, had impressed upon her that virtue was the noblest obligation of her rank. But the evil example she had known, in addition to her thoughtless, easy temper, tempted her to an abuse of generosity in becoming blind and callous to the grave shortcomings of her friends and companions. Her finer perceptions were blunted; she learnt to value other qualities before honesty; nay, sometimes to doubt the existence of a loftier standard, and to deal with all as morally on the same low level. When the Abbé de Vermond, who was himself accused of being a grinning cynic, felt bound, in the freedom of speech which had always existed between him and the little girl he had taught, to protest to his royal mistress that a shady reputation appeared a title to her favour, her first impulse was to laugh, though her next was to quote the name of the Princesse de Lamballe, in whose presence slander grew dumb. There was a period of Marie Antoinette's life when her nobler nature suffered deterioration, and it required not only riper years and fresh, strong ties, but the fires of adversity to separate the gold from the dross.

But there was one companion of the Queen who proved totally unlike the others, and vindicated the

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difference to the last moment of their intercourse. Comte Axel de Fersen, son of a Swedish field-marshal of Scotch origin, was born in Stockholm in 1755, the same year as the Queen. He had travelled much, and arrived in France in 1774, at the age of nineteen. He was very handsome, so as to be called *le beau Fersen*—tall, with regular features and noble, simple manners. He had the true chivalry, the name of which is so much abused. The quality with him meant conscientiousness, of which he was not ashamed; courage without bravado; honour where honour was due; above all, reverence for women. He had much intelligence but little animation, more sense than wit, and was serious without being sad; a hero of romance, but not of French romance; neither brilliant nor frivolous. Yet the unsurpassable politeness which comes from the heart, and his rare modesty, rendered him a favourite.

The Queen, little accustomed to such men, welcomed him gladly. She had an affectionate esteem for him, a great sympathy with him, perhaps a tender admiration for him; but it was not in the man to excite, or the woman to express, other feelings,[1] though the light-minded society around the couple were ready to draw different conclusions. But the Comte de Fersen refused to be enticed into the Polignac set, which

[1] St. Amand.

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made great overtures to him. He did not prolong his stay in France, but went to America, where he fought gallantly under the white flag. He returned to find a changed world. The butterfly and scorpion friends of the Queen's summer-time were scattered far and wide. Then, faithful among the faithless, he risked his life for the beautiful daughter of the Cæsars, who had lavished kindness on him in the season of her prosperity, before her beauty was faded, her name dishonoured, her pride trampled in the dust.

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CHAPTER IX.

THE QUEEN'S OCCUPATIONS AND AMUSEMENTS.

THE Queen was one of the most temperate of women. She breakfasted on coffee or chocolate, dined always on white meat—fowl or veal—drinking only water. She supped on chicken soup and small biscuits, which she soaked in a glass of water. She showed no great partiality for anything except her coffee, and a sort of bread to which she had been accustomed in her childhood. Much has been said of Marie Antoinette's interference in public affairs. The extent to which she did so was exaggerated, but the fact remained that, in the midst of her giddy whirl of pleasure, she found time to put her frail oar into the serious business of the country. The result was sometimes fortunate, but, unhappily, it was often the reverse. She procured the removal of one worthless minister, the Duc de la Vrillière. She objected to the unsuitable appointment of Sartines as *Ministre de la Marine.* She triumphantly opposed Turgot in the matter of the Duc de Guines, a

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prominent man of the Polignac set, who had been accused of unlawful and dishonourable employment of his power and opportunity as ambassador in England for the purposes of private speculation and smuggling. The Queen persuaded the King, against his resolution and the advice of his counsellors, to permit De Guines to bring forward State papers in his defence in the lawsuit raised against him. Marie Antoinette would believe no harm of the friend of her friend, and did he not jest with an impenetrable gravity, which gave the most delightful, original turn to his wit? Was he not the Versailles society-paper, stuffed with the last *bons mots* and slander? Could he not play ravishingly on the flute, having executed duetts with no less accomplished a performer than Frederic the Great? The Queen resented Turgot's uncourtly opposition to her will, his protests against her appointments and recommendations. She spoke of him petulantly as "*Monsieur Négatif.*" Finally, she brought about the dismissal of the single honest, energetic man who seemed capable of rescuing French finance from dire disorder and ruin. In the same manner she had an aversion to Necker, to whose money-changing faculty the nation pinned its faith for a time. His Genevese plainness and unvarnished self-complacency offended her. She could not see the integrity and measure of sagacity which lay beneath. She put up her lip, and

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called him "*le petit commis marchand.*" She looked on the King as degraded by his minister's reforms. She would fain have got rid of Necker, and it mortified her to have to do with his recall.

The Queen disliked and distrusted the English nation as a political enemy, though she received English visitors at the French Court with marked distinction. She said the mere mention of Pitt's name gave her the feeling of "the little Death on her back" (a goose going over her grave); yet her instincts as a sovereign, and her sense of honour and generosity, caused her to disapprove of the secret assistance which France was lending to America in the War of Independence, by conniving at Beaumarchais's consignment of military stores to the United States, and by permitting the volunteers under the white flag to fight for the republicans. There is no indication that she shared some of the *grandes dames'* enthusiasm for Benjamin Franklin in the colonial plainness of his unpowdered white hair, brown coat, and round hat. But the Queen's esteem for a brave soldier, and her sensitive jealousy for French glory—not at that time very well vindicated—caused her to listen with sparkling eyes to the stories of La Fayette's gallant deeds, to welcome him back, to exert herself to prevent his being a sufferer from a breach of French military etiquette in having taken foreign service. At the same time the favours went against the grain.

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Not all his high-minded enthusiasm could make the lanky, red-haired young man, whom people styled "Cromwell-Grandison," appeal to her sympathies. She might have stood the Grandison, but the Cromwell, naturally, she could not away with.

In one respect the Queen does not appear to have far outstripped her prerogative. Certainly she was not successful in her earnest efforts. Though the King shrank from disappointing his wife, and dreaded domestic contention; and though Marie Antoinette, urged and reproached by Mercy and the Empress-Queen, did her very best for the interests of Austria, and described herself as heart-broken because her help was so ineffectual, Louis declined to take an active part in Joseph's unjustifiable war with Prussia on the succession to Bavaria. Yet, as it happened, her Austrian influence was the main ground of the people's quarrel with their Queen. They fully believed that she had induced the King not to send a moderate loan to assist an ally, but to impoverish himself by forwarding vast sums to enrich Joseph. Thinking of this diversion of the public money, and listening to the wildest rumours of Marie Antoinette's personal extravagance, when an empty treasury was announced, the famishing multitude turned upon her with the frantic, ironical cry, "*Madame Déficit.*"

The Queen drove with d'Artois in the Bois de

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Boulogne, attended the races he got up, and partook of the collations afterwards at Bagatelle, where, on one occasion, the gentlemen appeared in riding dress and boots, to the great disgust of Mercy. She went with her brother-in-law to the masqued opera balls, walked about and looked on and laughed at the buffoonery of Paris; she had her private theatricals, and took a part in the comedies.

But her favourite diversion centered in the garden parties at little Trianon. She was very proud of her flowery alleys and mimic hamlet, and delighted in showing them to visitors. The King might appear when he chose, and Madame Elizabeth was free to accompany the mistress of the place; but even the ladies and gentlemen of the suite only went on invitation to *gouter*, or dinner, or tea (a refreshment just introduced), or early supper. She liked to say there was no Queen at Trianon, only she herself.

The dress for the country house was, for a gentleman, a plain frock coat, knee breeches, a little three-cornered hat; for a lady, a summer muslin, a gauze *fichu*, a straw hat. The Queen's was *à la Pamela*, wreathed with flowers. Somehow, it seems to have been always summer in that fairy land. Marie Antoinette used to write and carefully charge the Princesses of Hesse-Darmstadt, on their visits to Paris, not to come in hoops or high head-dresses, as these were not *en régle* for Trianon, and she was

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going to drive them in a little carriage, which could not contain such formidable accompaniments.

When the Queen entered any of the rooms where her friends were assembled, it was understood that she should not disturb their occupations. No lady rose from the piano, no gentleman stopped his game of billiards or backgammon. The new-comer listened, looked on, entered into conversation with whoever was disengaged, flitted here and there, sat down to some of the women's work, of which she was fond—or, better still, carried out her netting or tatting to a seat on the turf, or in a honeysuckle arbour; or she would call her little dog "Griffon," and find some idler to saunter with her in the shade, to fish with her in the lake, or to join her in watching the milking of the cows.

But the royal life in *villeggiatura* did not end here. There were more plays than those acted in the theatre. It was the Queen's pleasure that she, her King, and her friends, should be country people for the nonce, and dwell in the thatched cottages with the rustic balconies and the little ladders which led to them. The Queen's cottage stood in the centre, and she represented the *fermière;* the King was the miller, and occupied the mill, with its joyous tick-tack. The Comte de Provence, Monsieur, figured as the schoolmaster—a skit at his priggishness. The Comte d'Artois was in his element as gamekeeper.

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One may be sure these simple magnates had no want of retainers to do their behests. In the dairy, where the cream was put in the blue and white porcelain of Trianon, on marble tables, diligent dairymaids skimmed and churned, and displayed fresh butter and eggs. Madame de Coigny, with a head like a handsome boy's, was there—and so was the Duchesse de Guiche, the young daughter of Madame de Polignac, who looked like her pretty mother's sister, only she was taller and statelier. She had been married at twelve years of age to the son of Beatrix de Gramont, whom the King created Duc de Guiche. And Louis endowed the bride with a *dot* in proportion to the Queen's affection for her.

Down by the lake-side were more masqueraders—washerwomen this time. The Comtesse de Chalons, Madame de Polignac's cousin, for whose smiles so many gentlemen contended, with Comtesse Diane, to serve for a foil, beat the clothes with ebony beaters.

In the stable, where the sheep, unconscious of the honour to be done them, stood ready for clipping with golden shears, the Duc de Guines might not assist, because he was so stout, and so desperately bent on resorting to art to restrain his bulk, that his valet, in selecting his master's garments every morning, was fain to ask, "Does my lord the Duke

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sit down to-day?" But there were other helpers—the big, jovial Duc de Coigny, the nimble little chevalier of the same name, whom the women called *Mimi.* As for the rough-voiced, stiff-jointed Comte d'Adhémar, he could at least hoist the sacks of corn up the mahogany steps to the granary.

Madame la Fermière, distributing refreshments as she overlooked and encouraged her workers, had a winsome, smiling maid-servant that rarely left her mistress's side, whose man went the errands. So the dainty work, which was idlest pastime, went on to the accompaniment of gay jests and rippling laughter.

At the palaces, the King and Queen, with formal regularity, entertained to supper their brothers and sisters, who had always apartments at Versailles or Fontainebleau, or wherever it might be, and supped with Monsieur and Madame, and the Comte and Comtesse d'Artois, on alternate evenings. Of course there were breaks in the routine when persons of sufficient rank gave parties which the Royal family and the Court attended. The Marquis and Marquise de Duras were prominent among these hosts and hostesses. Games were introduced at these parties, which had more of sheer frolic and boisterousness than any other quality. But it must be remembered that the King, who loved *loto* at cards, was also fond of blind-man's buff, by way of recreation. An

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absurd game, which became a fashion of the day, was called *Descampativos.* The sport was to play at "the King," as little girls play at "Madame." A "straw king" held his court, gave audiences, rendered justice on ridiculous complaints, performed the marriage ceremony, and liberated his captive subjects with the word *Descampativos.* It was like the representations of the Abbot of Unreason, by which, with the consent of the true abbot, good Catholics burlesqued the institutions of the Church.

After the early suppers, the King commonly retired for the night, while the Queen repaired to the rooms of the Princesse de Lamballe or the Princesse de Guéménée, who had company for their mistress several times a-week. In both of these *salons* high play went on, though it was forbidden by law, and the King disapproved of it, and was rarely betrayed into lending it his countenance. At the Princesse de Lamballe's, where the Queen always met the Orleans circle—the Duc already bloated by a long course of debauchery, with the wild, startled glance which distinguished him—play was believed to be against the inclinations of the gentle mistress of the apartments. It was supposed to be maintained by the will of her imperious brother-in-law, and to please d'Artois, who was a conspicuous offender in this respect. At the Princesse de Guéménée's, on the contrary, the hostess was the keenest, most unscrupulous gambler of all.

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This Governess of the Children of France was one of the most objectionable women with whom Marie Antoinette came into familiar contact, and for whom she conceived a regard, because the Princesse de Guéménée was accommodating in suffering her *salon* to be the rallying ground of the Polignac party before Madame de Polignac was in a position to "entertain" the Queen.

Madame de Guéménée was the niece and successor in office of the redoubtable Madame de Marsan; but there never were two women more unlike. The younger of the two, the wife of the greatest spendthrift of the day, had utterly compromised her reputation. Among other charges, she was openly accused of cheating at her gaming table; but, unfortunately, this disgraceful accusation was freely exchanged in the noble company of the period, and a riband had frequently to be drawn round the tables to render dishonesty more difficult.

The Queen had played at cards well-nigh every evening since she had come to France. The love of excitement which grows with indulgence, the dread of *ennui* which haunted Marie Antoinette's pleasure-loving nature like a panic, prompted the Queen to try the stimulant of her generation. If she lost one night, the chances were she would win another, and the King was always ready to pay her debts. Yet the friends who knew her best declared that Marie

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Antoinette had no real love of play—she only engaged in it through complaisance for her friends, and to escape dulness. Be that as it may, at one time of her life she was guilty of high play to a very considerable extent, with the usual train of evils—late hours, undesirable company, and a chronically empty purse. In one year she lost fourteen thousand *louis d'or*, though she balanced the loss by the gain of six or seven thousand; and she was not so bad as others in the company, who lost seven or eight thousand in one night.

Marly had always been the great seat of court gambling; in wet weather there, even Louis could not altogether resist the contagion. Well-dressed crowds came from Paris to witness the splendour, and to join at second-hand in the play. These resented any withdrawal from Marly, or diminution in its cost. The business of the hour was conducted in the large card-room, with its cupola and balconies. From these balconies, unprivileged people, ladies not presented, adventurers and adventuresses sometimes, could look down on the brilliant scene in the blaze of the wax candles.

The Queen sat in the place of honour, in all the array of hoop and *paniers*, feathers and diamonds, ladies-in-waiting, equerries and pages behind her chair. She made her game only with her circle—members of the royal family, princes and princesses

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of the blood, ladies of the highest rank. But in the crowd pressing round, any *polisson* (uninvited guest, unattached gentleman, who had only to send his name to the usher of the room to command the entrance) could, with the leave of the Princesse de Chimay or the Duchesse de Tarente, or any of the other ladies seated with the Queen, bet gold or notes on her lansquenet cards, and go away to boast of what he had won or lost at the royal table.

The Queen's balls were of two kinds—early, informal, and weekly, like her little concerts; or very grand affairs, beginning late. Like her mother, she was fond of masqued and fancy balls, into which she introduced quadrilles of different nationalities.

Among the most notable of the *fêtes* were those given in honour of Madame Clotilde. For "*Gros Madame*" had to resign her project of entering a convent; apparently she made up her mind to the sacrifice. She started for Sardinia in great glee, Marie Antoinette wrote to the Empress, and with only modified grief for what the girl-princess left behind; though Madame Elizabeth, then a grave, sensitive little woman of twelve years, was inconsolable at the separation. There was not one of the family meetings at Chambéry on which Madame Clotilde had confidently counted; the parting, like the earlier parting at Vienna, was final. But Clotilde of France made a good wife to her "*Pie'mont*," identified herself with

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him and his family, and, as far as terrible calamities would let her, was happy.

Horace Walpole saw the Queen at one of these *fêtes*, and wrote of her beauty with an enthusiasm rare in that very fine gentleman. "It was impossible to see anything but the Queen. . . . She is a statue of beauty when standing or sitting—grace itself when she moves. She was dressed in silver, scattered over with *lauriers roses* (rose-bays), few diamonds, and feathers much lower than the Monument. . . . They say she does not dance in time; but then it is time which is wrong. . . . There were but eight minuets, and, except the Queen and Princesses, only eight lady dancers. . . . After the minuets were French country dances, much encumbered by the long trains, longer tresses, and hoops. In the intervals of dancing, baskets of peaches, China oranges (a little out of season), biscuits, ices, and wine and water, were presented to the royal family and dancers. The ball lasted for two hours. The monarch did not dance, but for the first two rounds of the minuet even the Queen does not turn her back to him. Yet her behaviour is as easy as divine."

Marie Antoinette was now in the flower of her beauty, on which French biographers love to dwell. Tilly said her eyes recalled all the changes of the waves of the sea, and seemed made to reveal

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and reflect the blue of the sky. They were short-sighted eyes, nevertheless, and she was accustomed to carry an eye-glass hidden in her fan. Her fine throat and the carriage of her head were remarkable. She once said, laughingly, to Madame Lebrun—"If I were not a Queen, shouldn't I look insolent?" "As one would have offered a chair to another woman, one would have offered a throne to her. When she descended the marble staircase, preceded by the officers who announced her approach, saluted in the great court by the beating of drums and the presentation of arms, all heads were uncovered respectfully, all hearts were filled with admiration of the woman, as well as with loyalty to the Queen."

One of the Queen's pleasures, fertile in scandal, was the summer-night promenades on the terraces and in the gardens at Versailles, which were maintained for several seasons in succession. These promenades were still more free to the public than were the masqued opera balls. We do not require the Prince de Ligny's assurance to understand how delightful these open-air concerts must have been, when a young May moon, or a red harvest moon, or the twinkling radiance of innumerable lamps, lit up the stately walks and flashing fountains, and fell here and there, dissipating the soft gloom of the masses of foliage. Musicians, discoursing sweet strains, would lie hid in the bosquets or the orange-house. The

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nightingale would hold its breath to listen to its rivals. "Our charming innocent nights," the kindly Prince called them, "which had the air of opera balls," yet were so much better, since the promenades were under the free sky, the fresh summer wind, scented with the fragrance of dewy flowers—stocks and roses, mignonette and jessamine, blowing around.

The company listened to conversation, they heard music, they perpetrated small practical jokes, dear to light young hearts. High up on a niche, the semblance of Louis Quatorze looked down somewhat grimly on the picturesque groups of beautiful, high-born women and distinguished men, and on the dark outer ring of spectators from the town of Versailles that swarmed and surged up and mingled inextricably with the privileged promenaders. D'Artois would cry *Bon jour, Grandpapa,* as he passed. One evening de Ligny placed himself behind the statue and answered the greeting. The Prince gave his arm to the Queen, who was enchantingly gay.

Marie Antoinette had still more frequently Madame or the Comtesse d'Artois sauntering with her. But, in spite of the family character thus lent to the recreation, insuperable objections to the promenades remained in the eyes of common-sense, matter-of-fact people. The late hours often extended far beyond midnight. The company was made up of the most mixed elements. As an instance, one evening an

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observer believed she recognised in a dark cloaked figure, seated on a bench close to the spot where the Queen stood laughing and talking, no other than Marie Antoinette's old enemy, Madame du Barry.[1] Such as she stole in, bat-like, in the summer darkness, to the place where they had once reigned, to spy mischief and gather garbage for the press and for the *salons* of Madame Adelaïde and the Duc d'Orleans.

In the middle of her gaiety, Marie Antoinette was attacked by measles when Madame de Polignac had the same juvenile complaint at her country house, so that she could not be with the Queen, to the two friends' mutual vexation. The King was banished from the Queen's sick-room, because of the risk of infection. The Comtesse d'Artois and the Princesse de Lamballe were always with the royal patient. They were not entertaining company, and Marie Antoinette's constant dread, even in health, was of *ennui.* She got the King's permission to solace her confinement by the introduction into her chamber of a livelier set of watchers, under the name of *Gardes de Malade.* Only French custom, in the matter of ladies receiving in their bedrooms, could have per-

[1] Madame du Barry escaped to England in 1792; but returning to France in the following year, to recover some of her property, she was arrested, sentenced, and guillotined in 1793. She was the only Frenchwoman of note who betrayed abject terror on the scaffold.

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mitted this resource. The favoured persons were the Duc de Coigny, the Duc de Guines, Comte Valentin d'Esterhazy, and the Baron de Besenval.[1] The gentlemen arrived at seven o'clock in the morning and remained till eleven at night, quitting their post merely for meals. Mercy was much provoked by this freak, which caused the jesting question to arise in the Court circle as to what four ladies should be selected to wait on the King when he was ill? The worthy ambassador comforted himself and his Empress with the circumstance that the most of the guards were middle-aged men. But when they obligingly volunteered to extend their attendance to the night as well as to the day, he promptly interposed, and prevented the further absurdity and indecorum.

These gallant gentlemen showed their good feeling and discretion by doing what they could to put it into Marie Antoinette's head that she was slighted by the King's compliance with her request, which was indeed a necessity, that he should not enter her room. Mercy had some difficulty in getting her to write a little note to her husband. But the good-natured young couple were easily reconciled. Louis was ready to swear that he had never cared for any

[1] This incident occurred during the earlier days of Besenval's acquaintance with the Queen.

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woman save Marie Antoinette, and a daily correspondence went on between them afterwards, to the satisfaction of both. As soon as the Queen was able, she had a private interview with the King—she standing by herself at the open window of one of her rooms, and he waiting alone, like a lover, in the court below, to catch a glimpse of her. and exchange a word with her.

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CHAPTER X.

ROYAL VISITS AND VISITORS.

THERE were many royal visitors at the Court of France in those days—the Archduke Maximilian, a loutish lad of fourteen, who got his sister into trouble more than once; the Darmstadt family—the Queen's old playfellows—with their father and mother, and their brother, Prince George; the semi-barbarous Grand Duke Paul of Russia, and his wife; the romantic Gustavus III. of Sweden, twice; Duke Albert of Teschen and the Archduchess Marie Christine, like a staid old married couple among these frivolous fine folk. Duke Albert kept his eyes and ears open in the fashion of a sagacious Saxon, and was not satisfied with the aspect and the hum of the *salons*. Marie Christine wrote to her old friend, Elenore von Lichtenstein, "Paris pleases me much, but I would not live yonder or be the Queen for anything in the world."

But the grand event was the Emperor's coming. Joseph accomplished his long-talked-of visit to Paris,

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and to his sister the Queen of France, in April, 1777. She had looked forward to his arrival, half with the old trusting sisterly affection and respect, half with nervous apprehension. She knew well that Joseph did not approve of many of her actions. He had written sharp censures, which she had resented, and she had probably heard of still more severe letters which he had been persuaded to suppress. But in one respect her family pride was gratified. The French, who prized philosophy and learning, must admire one of the most philosophic, highly-informed, widely-travelled men of his time. Even their Voltaire, about whom there had been the usual unhappy difference between the opinions of the Court and people, must acknowledge a comrade in Joseph.

One of the Emperor's many eccentricities was that, since he travelled *incognito*, as his brother Max had done, he would not stay at Versailles in the apartments prepared for him, but would take up his quarters with the Comte de Mercy in Paris. His explanation was not couched in flattering language. He said that he knew the château was large enough, and that he might claim a place there as well as any of the other *blackguards* who were lodged in it, but that his *vâlet-de-chambre* had made up his camp-bed in a ready-furnished house, and there he would lodge. The Emperor went to Versailles the day after his

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arrival—was conducted by a private staircase to the Queen's rooms, where the brother and sister met, and remained together for two hours. He was agreeably surprised, in spite of the strictures he stood prepared to utter, and the caustic contempt for the mass of mankind which had come over his spirit. He told the kind, lovely woman of twenty-two, from whom he had parted in her early girlhood, that he found her charming; if she had not been his sister he could have made her his wife. He said that if she were ever left a widow, without children, she must come to live near him and her mother. It is harder to say what Marie Antoinette thought of her elder brother, her second father and Kaiser. Loyalty, family affection, the old admiration and confidence, his softening towards her, moved her to speak out her mind to him, and to tell him, even in the first hours of their meeting, of the complaints which had been brought against her. Yet she must have been startled by the change which seven years had wrought in Joseph. It did not at all correspond with the alteration in herself. Time had only matured her, even if it had spoiled her a little. His life between twenty-nine and thirty-six had been an embittered falling away from the promise of his youth. The Emperor's hair had grown thin, his handsome face was gaunt and lined. The once silent young man spoke for ever, never ceasing his diatribes, launching his biting

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jibes all around him. He spared neither King nor Queen. Louis took the brisk remonstrances and unhesitating dictation in perfectly good part, as indeed they were meant for signs of friendship. The Queen listened wistfully the one moment, and winced indignantly the next, and again would defend herself, her King, her adopted country with the spirit and sense which the accuser liked. But it was not to be thought that the Court circle would relish the perpetual lecturing, or forgive the hardly concealed scorn.

One day, when the Queen was laying on more *rouge* than usual, her brother, who was present at her toilet, sarcastically advised her to put on more, and, pointing to a highly-painted lady in the room, remarked, "A little more under the eyes; lay on the *rouge* like a fury, as that lady does." On another occasion, when Marie Antoinette wore a quantity of feathers and flowers, she asked her brother whether her head was not well dressed? "*Oui*," he answered. "But that '*oui*' is very dry. Does my 'head' not become me?" "If I might speak frankly, Madame, I find it too light to bear a crown."

But if Joseph gave offence to the *suave* courtiers, he inspired for a time respect and admiration in men of solid intellect and merit. He pleased the people by the zeal with which he visited every object of interest in Paris, going out to Versailles and rating

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the whole palace for their ignorance of the public works, the hospitals, the *Garde Meuble*, with its famous tapestries from designs by Raphael, Giulio Romano, Albrecht Dürer. Joseph brought into fashion the school for the dumb and blind, of which nobody had thought much, till he went there and presented the teacher, the Abbé de l'Epée, with an enamelled box and a gold medal, in token of the Emperor's regard.

Joseph saw the Queen receive one public ovation, when she went in state with him to the opera. Against his will, she led him to the front of the box, and "*Chantons, célébrons notre reine*" was again sung with loud applause.

In spite of the soreness which the Emperor's unceremonious reproofs and reproaches awoke in the Queen, she parted from her brother with lively regret. She must have had a notion that he was amongst her best friends; she clung to him, though he hurt her; as long as he lived, she had hope of his intervention on her behalf. She requested him, quite meekly, to draw up a code of directions for her future conduct. He did it reluctantly, and left a well-written, vigorous essay for the guidance of Queen-consorts. If she read it more than once, she was not able to walk up to it.

After all, Joseph's visit did more harm than good to the Queen's cause. His hectoring, supercilious

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manner of talking to her, and referring to her, was liable to convey a false impression of his real feelings towards her. And his own popularity soon died out. The most sensitive nation in Europe, or out of it, could not long stand his attitude of superiority and disdain. The French came to consider Joseph's simplicity an affectation, and his downrightness a mere pretence of sincerity. For that matter, he called himself "a charlatan."

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CHAPTER XI.

BIRTHS AND DEATHS.

THE Queen had long been denied the blessing of children, and had sorely felt the deprivation. She had owned to her mother the pang with which she had known, at the birth of the Duc d'Angoulême, the son of the Comte and Comtesse d'Artois, that an heir was born to France who was not the King's child and hers. Maria Theresa had deplored the want of children as her daughter's greatest misfortune. At last many prayers and wishes were granted; on the 19th December, 1778, eight years after her marriage, when Marie Antoinette was twenty-three years of age, her first child and elder daughter was born. As many as two hundred persons of quality took lodgings in Versailles to be near the Queen. Not only so; according to French royal custom, all Paris, including its lowest rabble, found themselves at liberty to be present at the birth, and the room became so crowded that the Queen's life was nearly lost. The heat grew suffocating; the King had to burst open the closely-shut windows to admit air,

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while Marie Antoinette, on the verge of a fit, was bled in the foot before she recovered consciousness. The sex of the child proved a temporary disappointment; but the mother declared that, while a son must have belonged to the State, a daughter would be all her own. She wished to write to her mother in pencil. She announced that, as soon as she could be removed to a *chaise-longue*, she would be painted with her child in her arms, and the painting would be sent to the Empress. The Queen had a large present of money from the King; gifts were made to the poor; debtors in prison and patients in hospital relieved. When Marie Antoinette was sufficiently recovered, she and the King went in state to Paris, on the 8th February, 1779, to return thanks in Notre Dame and St. Géneviève. The same morning the Archbishop of Paris gave the nuptial blessing to a hundred young couples, with the brides dowered and "dressed" by the Queen—blushing brides and rejoicing bridegrooms being present in the Cathedral when the King and Queen repaired there. It was just such a pretty sight as Marie Antoinette had seen in Vienna, when her brother Joseph wedded with Josepha of Bavaria. But fate refused to be propitiated by such offerings, or rather prayers were answered in a manner little expected or desired. Joseph's marriage did not prosper. The fortunes of the baby-girl, with her birth thus commemorated, were dark and troubled.

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The Queen was a good mother, as the King was a tender father. Her character seemed to take a new start from the day that she incurred the responsibility of motherhood. Latent qualities began to be developed, of which there had appeared, till then, comparatively little sign. Her fondness for her children might have been counted upon; but she became also, for their sakes, careful and conscientious. She was firm to strictness. Both she and the King contrived to have their children much with them; she taught them their first lessons. She was content to minister to them. Two of them died in her arms.

The coveted tie was granted, but the old sacred bond to which the new had succeeded was about to be dissolved. The innumerable letters, beginning so stiffly, "Madame, my dear mother," "Madame, my dear daughter," so full of hopes and fears, of pleadings and remonstrances, of protests and excuses, and of caresses through all, were to cease. Maria Theresa, rejoicing in a living mother and a living child when Madame Royale was born, had still said to her daughter, "I will not be content till I see you the mother of a Dauphin." But by the time the son saw the light, the high head was lying in the dust.

The beautiful, stately woman, the ruler over many lands, who had looked from the windows of the old Burg in Vienna, and strolled along the alleys at Schönbrunn, had been called on to bow beneath

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many cares and sorrows, and at last under painful sickness. Her death was worthy of her life. She had pressed the medical men as to how long she could live—"a fortnight?—eight days?" The doctors said four days, probably. She sent for the Emperor, and told him; he had not hitherto believed in his mother's danger; he was completely overcome. She said, in order to give him time to recover himself, she would continue that day all orders of sovereignty, make signatures, hold a council, &c., &c. Later, she resisted the approach of sleep, and when those around her remonstrated, she cried, "How! Would you have me sleep, when at any moment I may be called before my Judge? I am afraid of falling asleep. I do not wish to be taken by surprise; I wish to see Death come." Yet she sent her daughters to pray in church, that they might not see her die. She bade the attendants light the dead-candles and close her eyes—it would be too much to ask of the Emperor.

Maria Theresa's death was a great blow to Marie Antoinette. The King feared to tell her what had happened. He communicated directly, for the first time in the course of their long association, with the Abbé de Vermond, to whom, as a lax churchman and suspected philosopher, Louis appears to have entertained one of his passive antipathies. He sent to beg the Abbé to break the distressing tidings to the Queen, and afterwards thanked him personally

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for the service. Marie Antoinette wept bitterly for her mother. She did not cease for many days to speak of the great Queen's glory—her virtues—her devotion to her people, her husband, her children. Years before, Marie Antoinette had told of her sorrow, when she saw the Comtesse de Provence setting out to revisit Chambéry and *her* mother. And the Queen had written in her exultation over a hope, which proved fallacious, of meeting the Empress in Flanders, "Nothing would be so good for me. I was but a child when I quitted Vienna; my heart was torn; but I did not know that I should never again meet with such tenderness, such counsels."

By a curious fatality, the words of the Empress have been sometimes used in crushing condemnation of her "*gentille Antoinette*," her "*charmante reine*." But those who know anything of Maria Theresa are aware that she was a plain-spoken woman, who could employ strong language on provocation, and that the term "ruin" stood with her for the forfeiture of royal dignity and political influence quite as often as for moral degradation.

In the autumn of 1781 a Dauphin was born. The delighted Louis took it upon himself to tell Marie Antoinette that the much-wished-for son was come, by calling to the Princesse de Guéménée, who stood at the open door of the Queen's room with the child in her arms, "My lord the Dauphin begs to be

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admitted." As soon as the infant was dressed, the King took him in his arms, carried him to the window, and showed him to the crowd without. He gave the order to the Prince de Tingry, captain of the body-guard, to quit the service near his own person and accompany the Dauphin to his room, where a lieutenant and sous-lieutenant were already on duty beside the child.

Nothing could exceed the public rejoicings; the triumph became well-nigh frantic. Men stopped each other in the streets to embrace over the event. The trades of Paris walked in procession, with their insignia, to Versailles. Fifty market-women, in their full dress of rustling black silk, set off here and there by diamonds, attended at the palace. The leaders of the party were met by the Princesse de Chimay, and taken to the side of the Queen's bed. An address was delivered, which had been written by La Harpe, and was of necessity read from the inside of a fan, even by the scholar of the group. The *poissardes* followed suit with their songs, one of which the Queen learned to sing—

" Ne craignez pas ! cher Papa,
D' voir augmenter vot' famille,
Le bon Dieu s'y pourvoira,
Fait's en tout Versailles en fourmille,
Y'eut il Bourbons chez nous,
Y'a du pain, du laurier pour tous."

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In the spring of 1785, the Queen's second son, who received the title of Duc de Normandie, was born. Marie Antoinette's last child, Princesse Sophie, was born in the summer of 1786. This baby was delicate from its birth, and died at the age of eleven months, fondly lamented by its mother. When Prince George of Darmstadt ventured to remonstrate with the Queen on the excess of her grief, using the argument that it was only an infant whom she mourned—"Ah! but, Monsieur," protested the woman and mother, "she might have lived to be a friend."

It is said the death of this child drew more closely the kindly ties which united Marie Antoinette to her sister-in-law, Madame Elizabeth. Louis XVI.'s younger sister was rather pretty, though inclined to *embonpoint*, like so many of her house, and she was very amiable. For some reason, her proposed marriage with the Prince of Portugal had been given up. From the time she was eighteen, she had religiously kept the rules of the convent life she desired to enter upon. She was a favourite with the whole family, including the King, who sought to turn her from her purpose, and only yielded to it so far as to consent with regret to her entering on her novitiate at the age of thirty, if she continued in the same mind.

A miniature of the first Dauphin, at three or four years of age, shows him a pretty little fellow, with an engaging air. But his early bloom soon faded; his

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health suddenly gave way; various ailments presented themselves, ending in spine complaint, which threatened deformity, like that of his grand-aunt, Louise, the Carmelite nun, and of his aunt, Marie Anne, the Abbess of the *Damenstiftes* at Prague. The Queen was full of loving care and sorrow for her child; but the poor little invalid, in the waywardness of sickness, sometimes turned from her, or tried her by peevish cries for indulgences which she could not grant him for his own sake. It is said there were hard hearts among the suite that plotted to alienate the boy from his mother, by persuading him she did not care for him—that she cared more for his little brother, the Duc de Normandie. It is certain the Dauphin's governor, the Duc d'Harcourt, was at variance with Madame de Polignac, who had already been appointed Governess of the Children of France, in room of the Princesse de Guéménée, forced to resign by the disgraceful bankruptcy of her husband; and the child was taught to express distaste to Madame's presence, because of a perfume she was said to use. He grew worse, and on the 4th of June, 1789, at the age of eight years, the heir of France died, as his baby sister had done before him, in his afflicted mother's arms. She was wounded on every side, for it was the day on which the members of a deputation from the *Tiers Etat* forced themselves into the King's presence, as if there had not been a father among them.

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CHAPTER XII.

THE AFFAIR OF THE DIAMOND NECKLACE.

JEANNE DE SAINT RÉMI, though claiming descent from Henry II., was the daughter of a man who had died in the great hospital, the Hotel de Dieu, in Paris. A lady of quality had picked her up, and reared her as half-companion, half-abigail. On the strength of her birth and her specious tongue, the young woman, "not beautiful, yet with a certain piquancy," succeeded in getting a pension of thirty pounds raised to sixty-five pounds a-year. In revisiting Champagne, where the alienated paternal acres of Foutette lay, Jeanne de Saint Rémi, "or Saint Shifty," as Carlyle calls her, had encountered a man as impecunious and unscrupulous as herself. He was no more than a private in the Gendarmes, but it was understood that his father had fallen "at the head of his company" at Minden. The two aspiring spirits agreed to unite their fortunes. Jeanne became Madame de Lamotte, by courtesy Comtesse de Lamotte, when she liberally bestowed the title of

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Comte on her husband, and the pair were let loose on the world, a fully-fledged, thoroughly-equipped couple of adventurers. Madame de Lamotte's original patroness had a visiting acquaintance with the Cardinal Prince Louis de Rohan, and in her company her *protégée* learned to know him also.

Prince Louis, who had helped to receive Marie Antoinette at Strasburg, had been the French ambassador at Vienna, where he had disgusted and incensed Maria Theresa by his worldliness, profligacy, and arrogance. She had at last procured his withdrawal, and her letters, expressing a positive terror lest he should come near Marie Antoinette and acquire an influence over her, were not without their effect. He was not allowed to appear at Court, and for ten long years fretted and fumed under a sense of the royal displeasure. On one occasion he was so ill advised as to bribe the *concierge* at Trianon to admit him to a *fête* there. He had thrown a mantle over his dress; but he was recognised, as he probably intended to be, by his Cardinal's red stockings. In place of being graciously greeted, and forgiven for the zeal which had outrun discretion, he was ignored and laughed at. He was now a man bordering on fifty, grey-headed, rosy, "pursy," with nothing save his blue blood and the great offices which he disgraced to recommend him.

Madame de Lamotte, hovering about Paris and

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Versailles, where she had lodgings in *La Belle Inage*, tried to make her own of backstairs gossip, and picked up a hint or two. Suddenly a great idea struck her, founded on the history of a magnificent necklace dangled before bright eyes, over which many an excitable imagination gloated. The Queen had a court jeweller, Bœhmer, who had formerly been jeweller to the King of Saxony at Dresden. Bœhmer was ingenious, speculative, and pertinacious. In the last reign he had collected and arranged, as earrings, six pear-shaped diamonds of great size and fine water. It was believed that Louis XV. would buy them for Madame du Barry. Louis's death put an end to this destination for the jewels, and Bœhmer offered them to Marie Antoinette, who bought them for three hundred and sixty thousand francs, paying the price in instalments from her income at intervals for the next four or five years—not a very royal mode of acquiring jewels, of which she had already a great store. The purchase got wind, was freely commented upon, and severely censured by the Empress.

But it seems that Bœhmer had another and far more splendid treasure of jeweller's art in his possession. For a period of years he had been collecting and assorting the stones which should form an incomparable necklace, in row upon row, pendants and tassels of lustrous diamonds, till the price

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reached the royal pitch of from eighty to ninety thousand pounds, English money. This costly "collar," according to rumour, was also meant, in the beginning, for the Comtesse du Barry. In the end, it too was offered with confidence to the Queen; and it does not require any particular comment to show how her earlier purchase of the earrings, and the manner in which she had paid them, gave some warrant to Bœhmer in counting upon her as the purchaser. To his immense disappointment and chagrin she declined to buy—she had enough diamonds, which might well be the case if the King had already given her a hundred thousand pounds' worth—she resisted even the King's offer of the necklace, declaring that, if such a sum of money were to be spent, it had better go for another "seventy-four"—alluding to the recent loss of a frigate—than to buy more jewels.

There was nothing for it but that Bœhmer should "hawk" his necklace in every Court of Europe, without success, till the German declared himself ruined, and passionately protested that, if the Queen would not buy the diamonds, there was no resource for him save to throw himself into the Seine. But there was a resource, unhappily for Bœhmer, unhappily for all concerned, most so for the poor Queen.

Madame de Lamotte, in keeping up her acquaintance with Prince Louis de Rohan, began to hint

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darkly that there might be ways of winning the royal favour. She threw out cunning words about the degree of importance and trust to which she had attained in the highest quarters at Versailles; about the emptiness of the Queen's exchequer, with consequent difficulties in the discharge of her charities; about the secret royal desire for the famous necklace, which the King would not enable Marie Antoinette to obtain.

The blinded and besotted Cardinal drank in these insinuations. The black art was called in to deepen his convictions. In an age when many men, especially many churchmen, believed in nothing, in spite of their professions, naturally they were given over to believe a lie. Cagliostro, astrologer and modern magician, was flourishing in Paris, and by circles and signs he promised the priest, De Rohan, progress in the only suit he had at heart. Still the dupe was not so infatuated as to require no proof of the validity of these momentous implications, and proof was not wanting; notes were handed to him, to be afterwards shown to Bœhmer, graciously acknowledging his devotion, and authorising him to buy for the Queen the diamond necklace. These notes were apparently written in the Queen's hand (that school-girl scrawl of which Maria Theresa was wont to complain); but they were signed "Marie Antoinette de France," a signature which so great a man as the Cardinal

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ought to have known was never employed by the Queen, for the very good reason that the termination "de France" belonged to the children and not to the wife of the sovereign.

Even a further assurance that all was right was granted. The Cardinal, trembling in a fever of hope and expectation, was told that a private interview with the Queen would be vouchsafed to him at midnight in the Park of Versailles. At the appointed hour, on the night of the 28th of July, 1784, De Rohan, in a blue greatcoat and slouched hat, was stationed, amidst shrouding, sultry darkness, in the neighbourhood of the palace. Madame de Lamotte, in a black domino, hovered near to give the signal of the Queen's approach. The whisper was given, "In the Hornbeam Arbour," and the Cardinal hurried to the spot, where he could dimly descry a tall lady in white, with chestnut hair, blue eyes, and a commanding air, if he could have really seen all these well-known attributes. He knelt, but before he could do more than mutter a word of homage and gratitude, the black domino was at his side again with another vehement whisper, "*On vient*" (They come). The lady in white dropped a rose, with the significant words, "*Vous savez ce que cela veut dire*" (You know what that means), and vanished before the "*Vîte, vîte*" ("Quick, quick") of the black domino, for the sound of approaching footsteps was supposed to indicate the approach

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of Madame and the Comtesse d'Artois, and the Cardinal, in his turn, had to flee from detection.

What more could be required to convince a man of the good faith of the lady, with a face not beautiful, but having "a certain piquancy"? Bœhmer received a hint that he might sell his necklace, through the Prince Cardinal Louis de Rohan, to one of the great ones of the earth, who was to remain in obscurity. The jeweller drew out his terms—sixteen hundred thousand livres, to be paid in five equal instalments over a year and a-half—to which he and Prince Louis affixed their signatures. This paper Madame de Lamotte carried to Versailles, and brought it back with the words written on the margin, "*Bon* Marie Antoinette de France." In the meantime, Bœhmer, the better to keep the secret, gave out that he had sold the necklace to the Grand Turk for his favourite Sultana.

The necklace was, in fact, delivered to Prince Louis, and by him entrusted to Madame Lamotte, from whose hands it passed—not into the Queen's. Having been taken to pieces, it was sent in all haste out of the kingdom, while the Cardinal, according to his own account, was still played with. He was advised to go out to Versailles, and appear as his rank entitled him to do, in the Œil de Bœuf, at the time the Queen should pass to mass, when, as she advanced to the rolling peal of "*Vive la Reine*," she would turn

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her head his way with a beckoning gesture, in sign of an understanding between them. In truth, her Majesty was accustomed to bend her neck from side to side, making gracious recognitions on nearly every progress.

While De Rohan received no more marks of the Queen's favour beyond a few vague lines from time to time, the ex-gendarme Lamotte was selling diamonds in large quantities to English jewellers in New Bond Street and Piccadilly, and betting by means of an interpreter at Newmarket. More sales were being effected at Amsterdam, and the day of reckoning, the day when the first instalment of the payment should have been paid, was approaching. It goes without saying that no payment, except a small offer of interest on the thirty thousand, was forthcoming. The Cardinal and Bœhmer were betrayed into wrath, dismay, and despair. Bœhmer took it upon him to apply, in respectful terms, to her Majesty for payment; and when she said the whole thing was a mistake, the man must be mad, and caused her words to be written to him, he sought an interview with Madame Campan, the first woman of the bedchamber, at her house at Crespy, where he had been dining, and in the gardens there, in the middle of a thunder-shower, astounded her with his version of the story.

On the 15th of August, Assumption Day, the Car-

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dinal Prince Louis de Rohan was at the Palace of Versailles in his high pontifical robes, in order to celebrate mass before the King, Queen, and Court. Suddenly he was sent for, from the company in the gallery of the Œil de Bœuf, to the King's cabinet. Both King and Queen were there. The King questioned the Cardinal indignantly on the transactions with Bœhmer, in which the Queen's name had been used. Marie Antoinette demanded hotly how the prince could believe that she would select a man to whom she had not spoken for eight years to do anything for her, and would communicate with him through a woman like Madame de Lamotte? Prince Louis's explanation, whether spoken or written, amounted to nothing more than a confused, garbled narrative of the events recorded, as insulting as anything which had gone before it. The King ordered the Cardinal to withdraw. He could only comply, with the single petition that the Church might be spared the indignity of his arrest in his cardinal's robes. But Louis was thoroughly roused, and he had made up his mind, rightly or wrongly, against the advice of some, and by the counsel of others among his and the Queen's advisers, what course he should take. Baron de Breteuil, the old rival of De Rohan for the embassy at Vienna, followed the prince, and while the crowd in the Œil de Bœuf stood aghast, summoned the officer on guard, and

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indicated the Cardinal with the words, "*De par le Roi, Monseigneur.* You are arrested; at your risk, officer." But before the Cardinal could be removed, he had spoken three words in German to one of his officials, and he had contrived to give him a slip of paper. The horse on which the man rode, post haste, to the Cardinal's palace in Paris, died on reaching its stable; the man fell swooning on arriving at the palace; but a trusty deputy was at hand, and the red portfolio, containing the supposed autographs of the Queen's letters, lay in ashes, before it could be sealed up in name of justice and the King. The Cardinal was taken to the Bastille. More arrests followed, including those of Madame de Lamotte, staying quietly in her house at Bar-sur-Aube, and the girl Gay d'Oliva, an unhappy girl, tall and fair haired, taken from the streets of Paris, and brought to the park of Versailles to personate the Queen.

It was said the Queen wept passionately over the scandal—well she might. The court in which the case was tried might prove the forgery, as in fact it did, though not in the way she expected; but every Court in Europe would ring with the story, and she had made deadly enemies, if not of the Church itself, of the great houses of De Rohan, De Soubise, De Guéménée, De Marsan, and their multitude of allies.

The *procés* lasted nine months, and every exertion was made for the deliverance of the princely culprit.

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On the day of the trial before the *Parlement de Paris*, he appeared at the bar in a long mantle of violet velvet—the mourning for a cardinal, with his red hood and stockings; while all the passages to the *Salle de Justice* were crammed with his friends, among them the head of the house of Condé, clad in mourning. Of the gay world present, the ladies, making frivolous use of what threatened to be a tragedy, wore red and yellow ribands, which they called "the Cardinal in the straw." The result of the trial was that, though the Queen's signature was declared false, Madame de Lamotte was sentenced to be whipped, branded, and imprisoned for life, her husband was condemned to the galleys, and a man called Villette de Rétaux, who was the actual fabricator of the Queen's handwriting, was sentenced to be banished for life, the Cardinal Prince Louis de Rohan was fully acquitted, with permission to publish what defence he chose to write of his conduct. When he left the court, he was escorted by great crowds, hurrahing over his acquittal, because it was supposed to cover the Court with mortification.

"Weep, fair Queen, thy first hours of unmixed wretchedness!" writes Carlyle. "Thy fair name has been tarnished by foul breath; irremediably while life lasts. No more shalt thou be loved and pitied by living hearts, till a new generation has been born, and thy own heart lies cold, cured of all its sorrows.

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The epigrams henceforth become not sharp and bitter, but cruel, atrocious, unmentionable." Indeed the memoirs which were published on the subject formed so many libels. Madame de Lamotte endured the sentence of being branded by a red-hot iron, with the letter V for *Voleuse*, on each shoulder, not without a struggle, for she yelled and bit like a wild cat during the operation. A few months afterwards she escaped from the hospital, some said by the connivance of the Court, because they considered she had been made the scapegoat, on account of her claim to the name Valois, or, as it was also alleged, to stop the incessant attacks on the Queen, published by her husband, who was safe in England, where his wife joined him. If this motive had anything to do with the escape of Madame, the result did not justify the means. It is believed the Lamottes lived for some time on the proceeds of the famous necklace; but when money failed them, they sought to earn more by fresh printed scandals and slanders. These did not prove sufficiently lucrative to prevent a writ being issued against the couple. When attempting to escape from the sheriff's officers, by climbing out of a window on the roof of the house, the pseudo-countess fell, and died from the injuries she received. The girl Oliva, who had been dismissed from the court, married a *mouton*, or spy, during the Terror, and finally died in misery in Paris.

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CHAPTER XIII.

THE 5TH OF OCTOBER, 1789, AT VERSAILLES.

THE times grew worse and worse. When the Queen went to Paris, she was received in sullen silence, and returned in tears, crying what had she done? She had risen with the dawn in the early days of the succession, and gone with the King's consent to see the sunrise in the grounds of Marly. She had called Trianon "little Schönbrunn." She had worn English muslin instead of French silk. She had received an old nobleman, or an intimate acquaintance, in an out-of-the-way suite of rooms, set aside for the use of one of her ladies on special occasions. She had driven for half-an-hour or less with a *dame de palais* in a *fiacre*, when the Queen's carriage had broken down on her way to an opera ball. Simple matters these—trifles light as air. Surely never woman was condemned on such evidence. But she had also acted pastorals at Trianon, and sat half the night at the gaming-table at Marly, when the nation was groaning in its

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affliction. She had been extravagant—more for others than for herself—not considering that a Queen's expenses could count in a nation's funds. Royal rank had brought her sorry friends. D'Orleans was more her enemy than ever. Besides the affront after the battle of Ushant, when the Queen had insulted him by offering to make him a Colonel-General of Hussars in place of Lord High Admiral, he had proposed one of his sons as a husband for little Madame Royale, and had been told that Madame was bespoken from her birth for her cousin, the Duc d'Angoulême, d'Artois's son.

The opening of the States-General, which had not sat since 1615, was the opening of the Revolution. France recognised that in a way, when, on Sunday the 4th of May, 1789, the procession passed between the churches of St. Louis and Notre Dame. Versailles was "a very sea of men . . . one vast suspended billow of life, with spray scattered even to the chimney tops." And there were not wanting women gazing from every vantage-ground, among their faces the bizarre features and wonderful eyes of Necker's daughter, Madame de Staël.

The troops came first, then the commons, in the costume which had been settled for them—black woollen mantle, plain white cravat, and slightly slouched hat; the nobles in velvet and gold lace, glittering sword-hilts, and plumed hats; the clergy in

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even greater magnificence; the King, simple in spite of his cross of St. Louis, his *cordon bleu*, and the most precious aigrette of all. The Queen followed, then the princes and princesses, the officers of state, the household, and more troops.

The King smiled, but the Queen's eyes grew dim, and her heart fainted within her as she walked. For not only was her Dauphin, the boy whose birth had been so proudly hailed, at the point of death; not only was her fair hair fast growing white with care, though she was not more than thirty-four; she was greeted this day, not with the old loyal shouts of "*Vive la Reine*," but with new insulting cries of "*Vive d'Orleans*," howled and hissed into her shrinking ears by ruffian men and savage women. To understand what the turning of the tide meant to Marie Antoinette, it is necessary to remember that to be loved was the very breath of life to her; to be disliked, to be hated, poisoned the air, and stabbed her to the heart. She had tried so hard to gain the people's regard; she had been so proud of it when it was to be won by a frank smile, a kind word. Yet though she protested she had forgotten German, that the language which her children spoke had become the dearest language on earth to her; though she decried her own Danube to exalt the Seine, her subjects had no term for her but "the Austrian woman."

Marie Antoinette looked on at the memorable

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scenes which converted the States-General into the National Assembly, puzzled, discomfited, but unable to conceive that nations can rise against their rulers —not even though the nation has been ground under a hydra-headed despotism, and smitten with woes innumerable. She had been called from her child's deathbed to consult what was to be done. On a former occasion she had committed a signal error by the Abbé de Vermond's advice. She had procured from the King the appointment to the onerous post of controller of finance for the Abbé's old patron, the Cardinal Loménie de Brienne. Again she was to be guilty of a fatal mistake; she was carried away by the persuasion that the bourgeois Necker, the benign banker whose solemn smile had always proved antipathetical to her, was too yielding, had compromised and degraded his King. Therefore Necker was dismissed—over-night this time.

On the following evening there happened to be a ball in the Orangerie at Versailles, but the people were otherwise engaged in Paris. The infernal regions seemed to have emptied themselves. The mob, headed by Santerre, the big brewer of the Faubourg St. Antoine, besieged the State prison of the Bastille, took it with but seven prisoners to let loose from its honeycomb of cells and dungeons, and slew the governor, De Launay. The Gardes Françaises sided with the mob; the white flag gave place to

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the tricolour—the red, white, and blue of the city of Paris. All France had taken arms as National Guards. When the news was brought to Louis at Versailles, his persistent tranquillity gave way, and he cried, horrified, "It is a rebellion." The better-informed messenger corrected him—"Sire, it is a revolution."

Instantly there was an exodus from Versailles, the beginning of the first emigration. It was headed by the Comte and Comtesse d'Artois, with their two children, the Ducs d'Angoulême and de Berri, the Princes de Condé and de Conti, the Duc de Bourbon and the Duc d'Enghien. These all hurried across the frontier.

There was another set of fugitives whom the Queen herself implored to go—the Polignac family, now the objects of fierce detestation. To do the little Duchesse justice, she and her husband fell on their knees, and prayed, amidst sobs and tears, to be suffered to stay with their royal mistress. But the Queen was inexorable, where the interests, the very lives of her friends were at stake. It is said that lately there had been a coolness between her and Madame; but all this was forgotten in the pain of parting. The Queen would fain have said the farewells which were wringing her heart over and over again. She sent the most lover-like letters after the Duchesse; she continued to write, and so did the King, who had also a great partiality for Madame

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de Polignac, as to the most attached and faithful of friends, so long as correspondence was practicable. The Duchesse in the guise of a waiting-maid, the Duc as a Bâsle merchant, their daughter the Duchesse de Guiche, the Comtesse Diane—roundly asserting they were poverty stricken in all save the Queen's regard—drove for their lives through Franche Comté, with its châteaux in flames around them, and were heard of at intervals afterwards in Switzerland, at Turin, at Parma with Marie Amalie, at Naples with Caroline, at Rome, at Vienna.

The Abbé de Vermond was the next to quit Versailles, likewise at the Queen's entreaty. With his dress changed, and not even his dry smile to illuminate his ugliness and betray him, he travelled first to Valenciennes, to the protection of Comte d'Esterhazy, and then to Vienna, where, too, all was reversed for him. Louis obeyed a summons to Paris, showing his single-hearted, honest, personal courage in doing so. He started in one carriage, with a small guard, trusting himself to the deputies, and leaving the Queen in such despair as to his return, that she had arranged, in case of his detention, to carry her children to the Assembly and claim its protection. But it went well with Louis this time, beyond a few indignities which, in the excitement of men's minds, were hardly meant as such. He went to the Hotel de Ville, made one of his pacific speeches, accepted

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and placed a tricolour cockade in his hat, showed himself thus decorated in the balcony to the crowd below, was hailed with shouts of "*Vive le Roi,*" and conducted back almost in triumph.

But the excitement in Paris grew wilder and wilder. If D'Orleans secretly fomented it, with the view of reigning in Louis's stead, the popular mind hardly needed to be so stirred up.

The Regiment de Flandres was summoned to guard Versailles, and on the night of their arrival a banquet was given them by the Body Guard. The King and Queen were toasted with enthusiasm. In the sense of relief which these tokens inspired, carried away by the strange sound of the old loyal shouts, Louis and Marie Antoinette—she carrying the Dauphin in her arms—visited the Salle, that by their presence and grateful acknowledgment the sovereigns might reward the demonstration.

"Behold! She enters there, issuing from her state-rooms, like the moon from clouds, this fairest unhappy Queen of Hearts; royal Husband by her side, young Dauphin in her arms! She descends from the boxes, amid splendour and acclaim; walks queenlike round the tables; gracefully escorted, gracefully nodding; her looks full of sorrow, yet of gratitude and daring, with the hope of France on her mother-bosom!"

The visit of the King and Queen made the loyalty

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all the more fervent. Traitorous songs, or what might be considered such, especially "*O Richard, O mon Roi,*" rang out amidst clapping of hands, and clasping of fingers, and tears and smiles. Some passionate spirit tore off his tricolour cockade and replaced it by a white, like that with which the young Dauphiness had once decorated her Dauphin and his officers. It was said the national badge was even thrown down and trampled under foot.

The rash act was the spark which was wanted to cause an explosion. The news of the banquet travelled to Paris, swelling on the road; and the answering news which reached Versailles was that a frantic woman had beaten a drum through the streets of Paris, and raised a rabble of *poissardes*, market-women, men in women's clothes, ten thousand strong, cannon in the van, one cannon mounted by a woman with pike and helmet. And the terrible company were marching on the doomed palace, uttering threats of vengeance and thirsting for blood. The National Guards were following them, led by Lafayette, the general of their choice. But he was there in the hope to restrain them, and to save royalty, if royalty could yet be saved. Luckily, such an army marched slowly along the heavy, wet roads, on the quickly darkening October day. Marie Antoinette had paid her last visit to Trianon, and was sitting in the grounds watching the falling

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autumn leaves, when the tidings of the approaching host—not entirely unexpected—were brought by the son of the Duc de Richelieu. "I know that they come from Paris to ask my head," she said; "but I have learnt from my mother not to fear death, and I await it with firmness." She was soon to vindicate her dauntless words. Louis, recalled from his hunt, wished her to go with her children in the carriages drawn out ready to start for Rambouillet, for Metz. But she would not leave him, and he had already abandoned the project of quitting Versailles. Even if he had kept to it, he would have found his way barred. As it was, his single order was to forbid bloodshed.

The riotous mob first besieged the Assembly, and then sent a deputation of twelve to demand an audience from the King. Louis granted this, as he granted most things. Four of the women—not the worst of the gathering—were admitted to the royal presence. "Louison Chabray, worker in sculpture, aged only seventeen," a pretty awe-struck girl, was pushed forward as the speaker. She grew faint, and Louis supported her, kissing her, and promising Paris food, if food were to be had for love or money. The deputation was satisfied, delighted; but not so the main body. They even threatened to hang poor Louison for having betrayed trust. And through wind and wet and gathering

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darkness, there were constantly coming in fresh detachments of savage pikemen—among them Coupe-tête, with his long beard—the precursors of Lafayette's Guards, whom he was detaining by frequent stoppages and speeches on the road, to gain time and enable the royal family to escape, or find means to defend themselves.

Night fell, an awful night, with the lights of Lafayette's impromptu troops so flaring in the darkness, that the scared hearts in the palace thought it was innocent Madame Elizabeth's country house blazing up and sinking down in ashes. The weary National Guard halted for a respite. Lafayette got admission to the beleagured palace, looking, as he felt, "full of sorrow," and protesting "in his high-flown, chivalrous way" that he had come to offer his head for the safety of his Majesty. The General was accompanied by Paris officials, who made the petition, or demand, that it would please the King to come and live in Paris.

Lafayette set the watch, drawn from the National Guard, for the protection of the château. All were fain to rely upon him at this moment, even Marie Antoinette. And "she alone, among all women and all men, wore a face of courage, of lofty calmness and resolve, this day. She alone saw clearly what she meant to do; and Theresa's daughter dares do what she means, were all France threatening her:

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abide where her children are, where her husband is."[1]

Sleep seemed to possess the tempest-tossed town; even Lafayette slept in spite of his responsibility, after four-and-twenty hours of hard service; even the Queen slept, with her life in jeopardy, as none knew better than herself.

In the grey dawn there was a scuffle between some of the Body Guard and the rabble. The sound of a shot, the groan of a dying man, were like the clang of the tocsin; in a few minutes the rabble-rout were pressing like a pack of wolves round the palace, overpowering the watch, and forcing the entrances. The Body Guard, taken by surprise, defended their posts like lions. Two or three were slain, others grievously wounded. A brave handful kept the foe at bay, while others slammed and barricaded the doors, and rushed to give the alarm, through the Queen's suite of rooms, to the farthest room, where she lay asleep. The Guard knocked at the door and shouted, "Save the Queen." The waiting-women clutched at the sentinels, shrieking and sobbing. "Yes, we will die," swore the gallant fellows; "save you the Queen."

Two of the ladies who had stayed by her, roused Marie Antoinette, tied a petticoat round her, and she fled by the Œil-de-Bœuf. The insurgents battered at

[1] Carlyle.

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the main door there also, and the guard could only heap up the frail defence of the duchesses' tabourets and the sentinels' benches; but the Queen was in the King's apartments, on his breast, with her children around her. For one moment her courage gave way, and she burst into tears, appealing to the friends that were left to her—"*O mes amis, sauvez-moi et mes enfants!*"

The danger was over. The old Gardes Françaises came to the rescue of the Body Guard, proclaiming they had fought together at Fontenoy; Lafayette appeared, and called together more of the National Guard. The tumult was quelled for the moment. But every heart was panic-stricken as to what should come next.

The Body Guard assumed the tricolour cockade, and shouted "*Vive la Nation.*" The King went out on the balcony with Lafayette, and heard not only "*Vive le Roi,*" but "*Le Roi à Paris.*" The Queen was called for. She had been standing near a window, at which watchful eyes still believed they saw muskets pointed. M. de la Luzerne, the *Ministre de la Marine*, sought to stand, as if by accident, between her and the window; she saw his intention, and prevented it, saying that was her place. At the mention of her name by the surging crowd in the marble court, she proceeded to walk out on the balcony, leading her two children. "*Point d'enfants*" (no children) was

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the furious shout. She put them back, and stood alone, with her arms crossed on her breast, in her simple gown of yellow and white striped linen—such a gown as she loved to wear in the domestic life of the country. At the sight of the fearless woman, standing solitary, exposed to their fury, those who would have torn in pieces the daughter of the Cæsars were forced to cry, with tears in their eyes, "*Vive la Reine.*" Lafayette, bending his knee, took her hand and kissed it, and the homage was redoubled.

It was a brief reconciliation, if not peace. But Versailles, the great castle where Louis said he always felt at home, was to be left for ever by its tenants. At noon, the King, Queen, Madame Elizabeth, and the royal children were seated in one of the carriages, but the travellers had to remain for an hour in the drizzling rain before the strange procession could be formed. It had been preceded in the course of the morning by an ominous vanguard of rioters, bearing aloft the heads of the slain gentlemen of the Body Guard. The mass of the company consisted of some two hundred thousand men and women—a crowd miles long—national troops, trains of artillery, pikemen, and women mounted on cannons; cart-loads of corn; some of the loaves which had been sent down from Paris stuck on bayonets; green boughs mounted on gun barrels; the royal family; a hundred of the

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National deputies in carriages; more soldiers; a mighty, hoarsely rejoicing, armed multitude, singing, shouting, "We are bringing home the Baker, the Baker's Wife, and the Baker's little Boy." The procession took from eight to ten hours—along the road the Queen knew so well—to reach Paris, so that it was by the light of the lamps and of streaming torches that the train wound its way through the crowded streets to the Hotel de Ville. The poor little Dauphin, in his pretty, simple sailor's suit, with his *cordon bleu* to mark his rank, cried with hunger and weariness. Marie Antoinette had doated on this child, calling him "*Choux d'amour*," while he in his merry prattle had styled her "*Maman-Reine*." The time was come when she had to listen with fast-falling tears, without the power to help her child, to the piteous wail which had converted so many Frenchwomen into furies. At last the family reached the Tuileries.

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CHAPTER XIV.

THE FLIGHT TO VARENNES.

THE Palace of the Tuileries was in the last stage of inconvenience and shabbiness, since it had not been occupied for many years. But comfort and splendour were little thought of by the King and Queen, who knew themselves watched—not guarded, and mourned the death of the Emperor Joseph, who might have been a stay in the storm. The King missed his hunting, and had no heart for his mechanics and geographical studies. The Queen played long games at billiards with him, in order to make exercise for him. Both of them had taken to reading the "History of England," and the book seemed to open at the reign of Charles I. Marie Antoinette and Madame Elizabeth busied themselves over their carpet-work.[1]

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[1] One of the last pieces of worsted-work done by the Queen at Versailles is still preserved. It is not finished; her needle remains in the canvas. It included covers for an immense sofa, six large arm-chairs, and two conversational chairs. The subjects are the attributes

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Outside, the deputies were framing the constitution, while the clubs were breathing blood and fire. As if a federal oath, an altar in the Champs de Mars, and a Feast of Pikes were not enough, every landmark of property and title, the very divisions and names of the country, of time itself, were rapidly disappearing. The Queen had been examined on the riots at Versailles, and had declared, "I will never be the accuser of any of my subjects. I have seen all, I have known all, I have forgotten all." According to some, Mirabeau was touched by this forbearance; according to others, he was growing sick of the course which events were taking. Gabriel Honoré de Mirabeau, the son of thunder, was the mightiest and most terrible product of the Revolution. An aristocrat by birth, hunted and maddened in his early youth by his father's relentless severity, he lay in prison after prison. He was guilty of a thousand outrages. He was the ugliest man, the greatest conqueror of miserable women, and the grandest orator in chaotic France. Covered with crimes and with glory, he was not without higher instincts and nobler aspirations, while his strange story and native

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of hunting, war, and agriculture, in medallions of white thread, surrounded by garlands of roses on a background of amaranth silk. Lilac daisies, worked on hangings of white velvet, were also executed by the Queen and Madame Elizabeth. The Queen worked continually when she dictated letters, was read to, or talked.

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power swayed the multitude. It seemed as he himself believed, that if he would, he and he only might yet save the monarchy.

The King empowered the Queen to enter on terms with Mirabeau, who had been making overtures to the Court. By the intervention of Mercy, it was arranged that Marie Antoinette should meet Mirabeau at St. Cloud. Bearing a half-weird resemblance to the lying incidents of the interview with De Rohan, this interview was also to take place with the greatest secrecy, under the open sky and the clouds of night, within the shadow of trees. One evening Mirabeau rode out from Paris, as if to visit a friend at his country house. Instead, horse and rider turned in at a back gate of the gardens of St. Cloud. The rider dismounted, and a trusty messenger, who lay in wait for the visitor, conducted him to a knoll, where he came face to face with the Queen. The world has marvelled over that strange meeting between Maria Theresa's daughter and the deserter from his rank, the friend of the people—between the man who had said of Marie Antoinette, "*Eh! bien,* let her live," and the Queen who had been accustomed to speak of the renegade as *le Monstre.* It is reported that her first involuntary movement was one of recoil at the sight of the rugged, scarred face, like that of a fallen angel. But she felt the spell of his genius, as he did homage to her majesty. At parting, he is said to

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have made the impassioned appeal—"Madame, when the Empress, your mother, admitted one of her subjects to the honour of her presence, she did not take leave of him without giving him her hand to kiss." Marie Antoinette held out her hand. "That kiss saves the monarchy," swore Mirabeau.

"You do not know the Queen," he said in confidence afterwards; "she is a man for courage." The opportunity was not given him to keep or break his pledge. Within a few months, wasting sickness was upon him. He struggled fiercely against it in vain. The next news filled all France, and not least Louis and Marie Antoinette, with consternation. Under the sweet April sunshine of 1791, Mirabeau lay dying. The great rebel spirit returned to God who gave it.

Flight was fixed upon for the King, Queen, Madame Elizabeth, and the children, after Mesdames, the King's old aunts, were known to have safely crossed the frontier.[1] The Queen's foolish clinging to her dressing-case and the packing up of her diamonds excited suspicion, while a sharp-eyed woman of the wardrobe had one of the National Guard for her lover. Information of the intended flight was already lodged with Lafayette, though he did not at first believe it, before the crowning step was taken.

[1] They drifted to Rome, to Naples, to Poland, and finally died at Trieste.

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Count Axel de Fersen was in Paris, eager to help the Queen and the royal family. So was the son of Marie Antoinette's old friend, the Duc de Choiseul, absent on leave from his regiment; while the Marquis de Bouillé, the governor of Metz, was in the thick of the plot, and had his soldiers ready to march at a moment's notice. Fersen superintended the building of a strong *berline*, or travelling carriage, and procured a lighter carriage, capable of holding two waiting-women. Passports were got for a Baroness de Korff, a Russian lady returning home with her two children, a governess-companion, a waiting-maid, a valet, a courier, and other servants.

At dinner at the Tuileries, on the 20th of June, 1791, there had been idle talk of a reported flight of the royal family, in which the Queen had joined, making a remark to Lafayette on the subject. In the evening, Monsieur and Madame came as usual from the Luxembourg to sup with their Majesties, when Madame was told for the first time, though she had been riding with the Queen that very morning in the Bois de Boulogne, that there was more in hand than supper that night. Disguises were found, Monsieur and Madame started separately by different routes, crossed each other's paths and made no sign, and both reached Brussels without misadventure.

The Queen had confided to her young daughter of

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twelve years what was necessary. She and her little brother were dressed for the journey, he as a small girl—when "he was charming," said his sister. The Queen herself went with Madame de Tourzel,[1] who represented the Baroness de Korff, and saw the three safely into a glass coach waiting outside one of the Tuileries courts. For greater precaution, the Dauphin was placed on the coach floor, half-hidden by Madame de Tourzel's skirts, where, no doubt, he felt in the spirit to play an amusing game of bo-peep. He had already supposed that he was to take part in a comedy, since he was disguised. Madame Elizabeth, in cloak and hood like Madame de Tourzel, and leaning on the arm of a servant, joined the party. As she entered the carriage, she trod on her little nephew, who, between amazement and the self-restraint he was beginning to learn, did not utter a cry. The King came out in the round hat and perruque of a valet. He also walked arm in arm with a servant. Fersen, as the coachman, was seated on the box; all was ready, but where was the Queen? Her companions waited an hour for her in desperate peril and anxiety.

She had indeed issued from the palace in a plain gown and gipsy hat, carrying a *badine*, or slight stick, such as ladies then used. In attendance upon

[1] The Duchesse de Tourzel succeeded the Duchesse de Polignac as Governess of the Children of France.

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her was one of the old Body Guard, dressed as a courier. She represented the waiting-maid of the Baroness de Korff. Many a time she had gaily played the part of a soubrette in her theatre at Trianon. Surely she remembered it in dressing for the character, for when she was going through the inner arch leading to the Place de Carrousel, and she had to draw back to let Lafayette in his lit-up coach roll by, as he had already passed the glass coach at the entrance, she was smitten by some lingering, half-hysterical sparkle of arch mischief and drollery in the middle of her breathless earnestness. She put out her hand, and with her *badine* just touched the spoke of one of the general's wheels. The next moment she and her guide—neither of them knowing Paris—lost themselves in the Place de Carrousel; took the right hand instead of the left; wandered over the Pont Royal and the river; went from street to street, and only by asking their way, and retracing their steps, at last reached the coach, having lost an hour when every minute was precious.

Fersen drove the party with all speed to the barrier St. Martin, where the *berline* awaited them. The little company changed vehicles, abandoning the glass coach on the road, and Fersen, on the box of the *berline*, conducted the travellers to the village of Bondy, to which the chaise with the waiting-maids had been sent in advance. Then the first conductor

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of the expedition took a respectful leave of his freight, found his own coach and coachman, and next day started for Sweden.[1]

The Baroness de Korff, her governess-companion Madame Rochet, her *valet-de-chambre* Durand, her waiting-maid Rosalie, and her daughters Amélie and Agläe, drove off in the summer night. For a time everything prospered. The first of the relays of horses and escorts of troopers which De Bouillé had posted all along the rest of the road to Metz turned up at Chalons, and the Queen thanked God that they were saved. But the soldiers' presence attracted attention, and did more harm than good. The men, while they waited, lounged about the villages, drank in the *cabarets*, and quarrelled with the villagers. Louis would look out of the carriage windows, and even alight and walk up the hills. As he did so, his heavy, placid features impressed the persons he encountered with a strange sense of familiarity.

Drouet, the postmaster of the town of St. Ménehould, nearly two hundred leagues from Paris, traced the association by the help of the stamp on an *assignat*. The man was a fiery republican, and an old dragoon. Forthwith he started on horseback, with a companion, to gallop to the next town through

[1] In 1810, Comte de Fersen perished by the violence of a mob in Stockholm.

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which the *berline* was to pass, and apprise the authorities. The Duc de Choiseul, who was following on the track of the royal travellers, became aware of what had happened. He also took horse, and spurred by cross-roads to intercept the informers. More of the royalist officers learnt the truth, and followed in the pursuit. The night fell, and there was racing and chasing and blundering in the darkness. As the great loaded *berline* jogged on, a rider, unknown, clattered by, calling in at the window words which nobody could catch. In spite of the excitement and apprehension, the weary little party slept. They had so far out-driven Drouet as to have gone through Clermont, the next stage beyond St. Ménehould, before he could give the alarm; but he got into the town of Varennes before them. There the King expected more relays of horses, and further troops; but when the *berline* stopped, hard upon midnight, on the hill-top above the sleeping town, not a horse or rider was to be seen. Yet if the fugitives had but known it, good horses and stout men in sufficient number were there—only at the other end of the village; while young De Bouillé, sent forward by his father, unable to comprehend the six hours' delay which had occurred, and believing that nothing would come to pass that night, had retired betimes to rest, and lay fast asleep.

The *berline* waited for half-an-hour in doubt and

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dismay, the postilions refusing, for any bribe or threat, to drive on without fresh horses. Two horsemen pricked past the stranded carriage; they were Drouet and his companion, with their information. They carried it to the tavern of the Bras d'Or, and whispered it to the tavern-keeper. He and they, with a few more patriots, dragged a furniture waggon, and whatever barrows and barrels came to hand, and formed a barricade across the bridge over the Aire.

When the *berline* at last drove up, muskets were presented, passports demanded, and Sausse, or Strausse, a tallow chandler and grocer, who was also the mayor, arrested the travellers.

Even then, with help so near at hand, there would have been hope, if Louis had uttered a prompt and vigorous defiance; but the passive virtues alone were his. He alighted, as he was bidden, and took his children by the hand; the grocer offered an arm each to the Queen and Madame Elizabeth, and the royal family crossed the market-place, by the flickering light of the few torches which broke the merciful shrouding darkness. The group entered Sausse's house, and mounted the stairs to his upper room, while the tocsin was rung from the church spire, and alarmed patriots, roused from their slumbers, flocked to the little square. Tocsin after tocsin in the villages round took up the shrill summons. In vain young Bouillé awoke, rubbing his eyes, and officers and soldiers flew

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hither and thither. The National Guard was there before them. Three thousand, ten thousand, sixty thousand, were coming up by break of day. And Louis, instead of giving orders for his escort to rally round him, and cut their way through before morning dawned, sat supping on bread and cheese and Burgundy—"the best he had ever drunk"—in Citizen Sausse's company-room. When the Queen had seen his disguise penetrated beyond the possibility of its farther preservation, she cried—"If you know your King, show it by treating him with the respect which is his due." What could she do now but weep salt tears for him and for herself, lay her weary children on the first bed she could find, and beseech the grocer, his wife and mother, to save these innocent lives. The little household were amazed, but not unkind—nay, the elder woman, unable to shake off the traditions of her youth, fell on her knees before the guests.

It has been surmised, in later days, that all except the red-hot spirits of the Assembly would not have been sorry if the King and his family had escaped. The nation would thus have been relieved from a grievous necessity, an incubus weighing upon it with always more distracting and deadly pressure. But the exemption was not granted. The news of the King's flight excited the people to one of their periodical fits of madness. The infection spread.

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The extreme men of the Assembly carried the day, and issued an order to seize the King wherever he might be found, and bring him back to Paris. An aide-de-camp of Lafayette's carried the decree to Varennes, where, after six hours of uncertainty, amidst tumult becoming more and more threatening, the King and Queen awaited the will of the nation. Marie Antoinette heard the tidings with despair. When Romeuf, the aide-de-camp, tried to defend his general, and said Lafayette, though in love with liberty, was not on that account the enemy of the King and the royal family, she said passionately, "He is so. He has only the United States and a republic in his head. He will see what a French republic is." She demanded to read the decree of the Assembly. "*Les insolents!*" she cried, stopping short and throwing down the paper, which fell on the bed where the children slept. She snatched it up and flung it on the ground. "It would soil my children's bed," she protested.

The *berline*, with its owners, the gentlemen of the Body Guard who had acted as the courier and servants now sitting bound on the roof, returned to Paris among scores of thousands of National Guards, travelling so slowly that four days were spent on the humiliating journey. Two deputies had been sent down literally to see the return of the King, for they drove along with the family inside

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the crowded *berline.* These were the advocates Pétion and Barnave. Both were selected on account of their supposed hostility to royalty; but the men showed their different natures. Pétion, with his hard head growing grey, sat unmoved between the princesses, aunt and niece; ate his food without ceremony, tossing his chicken bones past the King's face out of the window; allowed Madame Elizabeth to pour out his wine, calling to her when to stop; spouted his republican sentiments in reply to Louis's civil remarks, and in the heat of his argument pulled the fair curls of the Dauphin, who sat on one of the women's knees, till the child cried out with pain. Young Barnave, slight of figure at all times, made himself as *mince* as possible; tried to annihilate himself sitting between the King and Queen; declined to eat in their presence; paid them every respectful attention; pleased and touched the Queen by his generous sympathy. From that date, whatever opinions he had held formerly, he strove to save the monarchy—not without a melancholy presentiment that, in doing so, he was signing his own death-warrant.

Like culprits caught red-handed, the King and Queen arrived in Paris, six days after they had quitted it, on the Saturday afternoon, to find a crowd, a hundred thousand strong, assembled in the streets to gloat over the travellers' degradation and jeer at

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their misery. The watch on the prisoners grew stricter than ever, and was maintained by night as well as by day.

The *emigrés* gathered together, to the number of from fifteen to twenty thousand, under the leadership of the soldier-prince De Condé, and only waited for the promised support of Austria and Prussia to enter France. Opposed to them was a camp of twenty thousand *sans culottes*, as yet half-starved, half-clad, and without officers to speak of.

In April, 1792, the King, with tears in his eyes, gave his consent to the wish of the Assembly, and proclaimed war. Roland, the Girondist, with his patriot wife, held the post of Necker, who had retreated to Switzerland; General Dumouriez, "whose whole life was a march, a battle," was Minister of War. The Assembly passed more and more severe laws against the priests who had not taken the oath to the constitution, and the *emigrés*, especially Monsieur. The King, as a good Catholic, a prince, and a kinsman, stoutly and stubbornly vetoed these laws. The Queen got the discredit of the veto, and she received the new taunting title of "Madame Veto." Roland resigned. Dumouriez, like Barnave, had striven in the end to save the King and Queen. He was won by her, as so many brave spirits and manly hearts that came in contact with her owned her sway. He spoke with her, implored,

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well-nigh wept to her, on the attitude of the King; but, finding that nothing could be done, he set off to join the army in camp.

On the 20th of June, 1792, a procession of citizens, bearing a transfixed bull's heart, with the motto, *Cœur d'Aristocrate*, and a pair of black silk breeches, hoisted aloft with the proclamation, "Tremble, tyrants; here are the *sans culottes*," wound through the streets of Paris, for the purpose of presenting a petition to the Assembly. Next, the crowd, gathering as it rolled along, dancing and singing the "*Cà ira*," led by Santerre, took its way to the Tuileries, and besieged the palace, after having planted in the immediate neighbourhood one of the poplar trees of liberty thickly dotted over France. The raving mob demanded admittance, and at last smashed open a door, bursting in like a headlong torrent. Louis faced his rebellious people, and asked, so quietly as to stagger the most violent, what they wanted. The removal of the veto, the recall of the patriot ministers. This was not the time and not the way to ask such things, Louis answered. Madame Elizabeth stood by his side. At the earnest request of the King and his friends, Marie Antoinette, known to be the chief object of the popular hatred, remained behind with her children. It was the only time that she consented to yield her place by Louis's side; and what a pang of humiliation and anguish the cause of the

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concession must have cost her! The rabble, pressing into the room, took the King's sister for his wife, and proceeded to insult her. Her friends, fearing for her life, cried out, "Spare Madame Elizabeth." "Why did you say that?" the unselfish woman remonstrated; "I might have saved the Queen." A few grenadiers of the National Guard installed Louis in the embrasure of a window, where he stood for three hours, with the multitude swaying and swaggering past him. Somebody handed him a red cap of liberty. Louis put it on. Having complained of thirst, he drank, without hesitation, from a bottle which one of the crew offered him. "Fear!" he cried, almost disdainfully, in answer to the words, "Sire, do not fear," whispered to him by a member of the guard. "Feel there;" and he put the man's hand on his breast, to satisfy the speaker that the upright, kindly heart beat undisturbed by the uproar.

There was a call for the Queen. She insisted on coming forward with her children; disarming the assailants by her unquailing dignity, as the King had staggered them by his unruffled tranquillity. She sat with her children and ladies behind the barricade of a table while the citizens streamed by. To her, too, a hand, audacious or humane, offered a red cap; she took it, held it for a moment, and then put it on the Dauphin's head, but it was too large, and fell over

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the child's face. "How old is your girl?" inquired an inquisitive *citoyenne.* "Old enough to remember and be shocked by such scenes," replied the ready-witted woman. Big Santerre leant across the table, and bid her not fear. "This people loves you more than you think." But Marie Antoinette's pride revolted, and her sorely-tried patience gave way at the assurance. "It is not by such as you that I judge the French people," she protested passionately; and Santerre did not forget the repulse.

At last a deputation from the Assembly, with the Mayor Pétion, the same who had escorted the royal family from Varennes, arrived to restore order. Pétion, hoisted on the shoulders of two grenadiers, harangued, and succeeded in dismissing the throng.

The family were free to cling to each other, sobbing out their thankfulness. It is said that the King still wore the red cap, which he had forgotten; but that, when his attention was called to it, he tore it off, flung it on the ground, and turned to the Queen with a burst of tears—"Madame, it was not to see me insulted thus that I brought you from Vienna."

Ah! yes, the days were different when the boy and girl met at Compiégne, and hunted and danced and quarrelled and kissed again at Choisy and Marly.

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CHAPTER XV.

THE TEMPLE.

FROM June to August, 1792, were dismal summer months at the Tuileries—not without one last dying gleam of light. Lafayette, leaving the camp in which he was serving, appeared in the Assembly, and spoke eloquently on behalf of authority and order, with the desperate hope of serving the King and Queen. But the Jacobins were in the ascendency; he was badly received, and narrowly escaped being impeached. The time was past, he could do nothing. He had to leave Paris, baffled and foiled. French historians, loyal to Marie Antoinette, have brought themselves to acknowledge that she would not let Lafayette save her when it was in his power. Neither could Barnave nor Dumouriez ward off the doom hanging over the high-spirited, tender-hearted woman, with her strong prepossessions and prejudices. There is infinite pathos in Marie Antoinette's last letter to Mercy, in which she tells him that while she can

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count on none besides, she counts upon him, reminds him of his attachment to her mother, and calls upon him to save her and hers, if there is yet time. The 14th of July (the anniversary of the fall of the Bastille) may prove an epoch of general mourning for France, and regret on the part of the foreign powers for their delay in acting.

Poor old Mercy answers almost as desperately as herself. Writing on the 9th July, 1792, he explains why the movement she desires cannot be made so soon as she wishes. But the armies are at Coblentz and Fribourg; they will enter France on the first days of August. In a month the King and Queen, with their family, will be saved. He is overwhelmed with terror and grief. He will give his blood for the Queen; nothing shall be omitted that can save her.[1]

Yet, although the Queen turned at last to the *emigrés* and the foreign powers for relief, she had long struggled against this resource. Her youthful intimacy with D'Artois had been succeeded by misunderstanding, and disgust at his behaviour in exile. She could not have the smallest confidence in

[1] Mercy waited till the last in Paris, making every conceivable effort for Marie Antoinette's deliverance. When all was over, and he had seen the end of his care for his and his Empress's little Archduchess, he came over to London, and died there in the year following —1794.

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Monsieur. The possibility of a provisional government, with Louis deposed and Monsieur regent till the Dauphin came of age, had been present to her mind, and was extremely repugnant to her. An invasion was long as terrible to her as to Louis; she would fain have had the monarchy saved from within. She clung to the last to the belief, which she handed down to her successors, that the men of the Revolution were not the whole nation—with the scum rising to the surface, no doubt raised by the cruel misgovernment of centuries—but represented a section of evil men who had misinformed and misled *les bons bourgeois.* She regarded it as an infatuation, made up of fear and apathy, that this state of matters should last for a day. It was only after she was in hourly dread of the assassination of the King and the whole family that she implored fatal foreign aid. The people who had learned to revile and abhor her, believed that she was bringing the invaders into France. In reality, it was the daughter of France, the gentle, nun-like Madame Elizabeth, who, in her greater ignorance of the consequences, her unshaken faith in her brothers, especially D'Artois, her devotion to the monarchy, was eager to appeal to the God of battles. The person *she* distrusted was "the old fox Mercy."

A new terror threatened Paris—six hundred Marseillais, summoned by Barbaroux, marched to

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the capital, introducing there still hotter, fiercer blood, with the famous song supplied by Rouget de Lisle.

On the night of the 9th of August, 1792, it was plain another insurrection was imminent—Jacobins and Marseillais against such of the blue-coated National Guards, commanded by Mandat, a friend to the King, as chose to defend order, a hundred loyal gentlemen, led by the old Marquis de Maillé, and the faithful thousand Swiss who still continued Louis's guard. In the Assembly and the clubs, the private houses, and above all, the palace, where Louis stood among his black-coated courtiers and red-coated Swiss, there was no thought of rest. By midnight the tocsin was filling the air with wild music, ringing out from every steeple. For a long time there was no answer to the summons, and the aristocrats, with reviving hope, cried, "*Le tocsin ne rend pas*" (the tocsin yields no result), while Louis rose from a short slumber, with the powder shaken from one side of his wig, and Madame Elizabeth took the Queen to one of the windows, where the courtiers stood distinguishing the different clangs of the bells of the different steeples—among them that of St. Germain-Auxerrois, which gave the signal for the Massacre of St. Bartholomew two hundred and twenty years before.[1]

[1] Carlyle.

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It was not to hear the bells that the women stood there; the grey dawn had risen, and Madame Elizabeth pointed out to Marie Antoinette a beautiful sunrise over the city of terror.

But during the night, Mandat, the friendly commandant of the National Guard on duty near the palace, had been sent for to the Assembly, arraigned by the extreme section, despatched to prison, and massacred there. When the Queen heard the disastrous intelligence, she said truly that all hope was gone.

In the early morning, the King went down with old De Maillé to review the troops, but instead of the cry, "*Vive le Roi*," a fierce shout, "*Vive la Nation*," greeted him.

Marie Antoinette heard that sound, and burst into tears; yet the next moment her eyes were dry, her look calm, even elated.

The rioters, from twenty to thirty thousand, with the "black-browed" Marseillais in the van, marched on the palace. There was none to oppose them. The National Guard gave way, and the cannoneers threw down their weapons. Rœderer, the magistrate on duty, advised the King to repair to the Assembly, and claim its protection. "Let us go," said the King, after a moment's pause. There are various accounts of how the Queen answered the proposal. The most probable is that after a brief remonstrance she was

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silent. The royal family left the palace at eight o'clock in the morning, never to return. They were accompanied by the Princess de Lamballe and the Duchesse de Tourzel. Detachments of the Swiss and of the National Guard were round the group, as they walked through the hooting crowd in the gardens the short distance to the Assembly. The King remarked mechanically how early the leaves were falling that year, and the Dauphin kicked them before him as he ran. A grenadier of the Guard lifted the boy and carried him up the steps. The Assembly had already sent a deputation to meet the party. "I am come here to prevent a great crime," said Louis, on entering; "I think I cannot be better placed, or more safely, gentlemen, than among you." He and his had the shelter they sought granted to them, but they were enjoined not to disturb the business of the day. They were filed off to a reporter's box, where they sat till three o'clock next morning, listening to a score of motions proposed and carried—among them, one suspending Louis from all authority, another voting a sum of money to the Marseillais.

In the interval the rioters had entered the Tuileries, from which the courtiers, and those of the National Guard who had not sided with the mob, had withdrawn by degrees. Only those of the Swiss who had not accompanied Louis remained at their post by the great staircase. The faithful Helvetic lion did

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die with his paw over the broken lily. In spite of remonstrances, urged both in German and Marseillais; in spite of Louis's order to cease firing, which indeed left the men at the mercy of their foes; in spite of generous citizens risking their lives to extricate stray victims, the mass of the Swiss perished. Not a few fountains alone, but rivers of waters, tears of sorrow and shame, were wanted to wash old Paris from its blood-stains.

The royal family slept that night, and for three more nights, in a few rooms provided for them in the Convent of Feuillants, passing the days in the reporter's box in the Assembly. At last the little party were removed to the Temple—part of which was a palace, and part known as the Tower of the Temple, a prison. In the last, after a little hesitation, the King and his family were placed—thus openly treated as prisoners—and all doubt as to their condition finally removed.

The Mayor's carriage, which conveyed the prisoners, passed through the Place Vendôme, and there they saw Louis XIV.'s statue prostrate and mutilated like that of Dagon. The accommodation in the Temple was so scanty, that Madame Elizabeth had at first to sleep in the kitchen, and then to share a small room with Madame Royale, while the Dauphin's little bed was by the Queen's.

Within a few days the ladies who had accompanied

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the royal family were removed from their friends—the Duchesse de Tourzel to be dismissed; the Princesse de Lamballe to be consigned to the prison of La Force.

Tidings of the advance of the *emigrés* and their allies followed. They had entered France, and were approaching Verdun. The wrath and dread of the people knew no bounds. Revenge was sweet, and they would have it, before they were overtaken by judgment. Besides the Assembly and the Convention, the Revolutionary Tribunal had begun to sit, for the purpose of disposing summarily of "the thirty thousand" aristocrats, especially of the three or four hundred *suspects* in search of whom any house might be broken into. The prisons were already chokefull of victims. Even a guillotine working all day could not clear them away in time to make room for the crowds that were coming. Committees sat with the prison registers before them. There were rapid examinations, with equally swift sentences of condemnation or release. Orders of removal from one prison to another were issued, and men and women were taken from La Force to be led to L'Abbaye, or from L'Abbaye to be conducted to Le Châtelet. But in the gateway, and at the entrance to each prison, were stationed gangs of ruthless men and women, armed with axes and sabres, no longer glittering and clean, but red and dripping.

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When the prison doors were thrown open on the horrid spectacle, the bravest man, the most hardened culprit recoiled. We have heard something of one of the timid, tenderly nurtured women, thrust out on that wall of sharp reeking steel, with the demoniac faces glaring above it. The Princesse de Lamballe was lying on her bed in La Force when she was summoned to remove to L'Abbaye. She objected, saying that she was well enough where she was. She was told that she must go; the way would not be long. She had one fleeting glimpse of "the tiger's jaws," as she tottered on the threshold; then the wild beast sprang. She was cut down from behind. The woes of the gentle heart were over. Let them heap what foul indignities they might on the bleeding body, her pure soul was before the throne of the All-pure, and her name remains a watch-word of tender fidelity.

Within the thick walls of the Tower of the Temple, the beating of the drums, which called out the people to the massacres of the 3rd of September, had been heard all night. After dinner, the King and Queen were about to sit down to a game at backgammon, which they played that they might exchange a few words unobserved, when a noisy hubbub was heard without. A tricolour ribbon had been drawn round the Temple, but the disturbers of the peace were coming as near to it as they might. The man on

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guard shut the door and window of the Queen's room, and drew close the window curtain. Other soldiers and members of the municipality came in. Somebody bade the King look out; others indignantly forbade it. Louis asked why the curtain was drawn. "Well, if you will have it," cried a young man, "it is the head of Madame de Lamballe they want to show you."

Alas! for poor Marie Antoinette, standing where the words had reached her, frozen to the spot, for two mortal hours, so that when the turmoil ceased—the crowd having gone with their trophy elsewhere—and Pétion's secretary entered on a mission to the King, the clerk fancied she had risen to pay respect to the magistrate's representative. All night long her daughter and her sister-in-law heard her sobs of anguish. She was again the little rosy-cheeked Archduchess, alone among strangers, on the eve of her wedding, with the face of the girl who had been already wedded and widowed beaming loving homage and sisterly yearning upon her. She was once more gliding over the snow plain, unspotted by a single drop of blood, and a fair young face, gathering gladness from her own, was close to hers. She was turning away from wistful eyes and quivering lips that she might hurry to Madame de Polignac's *salon.* Her heart was leaping up to welcome back the dear old friend who had dared the tiger's jaws for her

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sake, and whose life was the forfeit. And what of the bereaved old father at Scéaux, whom men had called the good Duc de Penthièvres? He was wringing his withered hands, and moaning—"I thought they would have spared the child I loved." Among the last souvenirs that were taken from Marie Antoinette was a little miniature of the Princesse de Lamballe, in a shagreen case, which the Queen had carried in her pocket.

From that day the monotonous life of the Temple began its melancholy routine, and went on for about four months, with little break or variety. The King rose early. His faithful valet, Cléry, dressed his hair, and then performed the same service for the princesses, giving them at the same time what news he had been able to pick up. The ladies came up and breakfasted with the King, who returned with them, and they all spent the day together in the Queen's room. The lessons which Louis and Marie Antoinette had pleased themselves with hearing their children say in the old days, became now the great resource of the father's and mother's lives. Louis brought forth his stores of geography, the Queen heard her daughter read history. There was a cipher table which the Queen carried in her pocket, from which the Dauphin learned his sums. Sometimes associations proved too hard. Once, when Marie Antoinette was giving her daughter some instruction in music, she came across a piece for

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the piano, entitled "The Queen of France." That had been composed when the people delighted to honour her—when her notice was distinction; and now—— The family walked in the gardens, and then Cléry played at ball with the Dauphin. Houses which were in the free world without commanded the Temple Gardens, and friendly signs were sometimes made from the windows to the royal prisoners—signs dear to the sinking hearts. A board was held up, and immediately withdrawn, with the words "Verdun is taken" written on it. Madame Elizabeth was quick enough to see it. Had the God of battles then heard her prayers? If she had but known it, every step of the allied army was bringing her and those dearest to her a step nearer to the scaffold. The Queen, looking at the new moon, and perhaps thinking of the assurance in Mercy's last letter, said when the next moon shone the captives would be free. Scarcely so in any case, for a desperate people had sworn that the deliverers should find only dishonoured corpses. But the early successes of the Austrians had met a check. Dumouriez and his *sans culottes* were holding the enemy at bay.

The changes rung on these forlorn days depended on the greater humanity or the increased brutality of the keepers. Some of them would address the King as "Louis," and would sit down wearing their hats in his presence. Louis had to give up his sword.

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The Queen and the princesses were searched. Marie Antoinette had her watch, which she had brought with her from Austria, confiscated, and cried at parting with it. Every sharp instrument, including scissors, was required from the owners, so that they had to bite off their threads like the humblest sempstresses.

In December the King's trial was announced. He was only permitted to see his family once a-day for a time, then all intercourse with them was prohibited. He petitioned for leave to see his children, and was answered that in that case they must be removed from their mother, when he withdrew his petition.

Brave, disinterested counsel—among them the fine old minister, Malesherbes[1]—undertook Louis's defence; but neither he nor they had much hope of an acquittal, though he could truly say that he had turned about in his mind what warrant his people could produce for the treatment to which they had subjected him, and could find none.

The story of the trial has a world-wide publicity. Everybody knows how Gamain, the rude smith who had taught the King his trade, and sometimes rated soundly the most submissive of his apprentices, gave information where an iron box was to be found in

[1] Malesherbes, his two daughters and many of his kindred, fell by the guillotine in 1794.

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the wall of a room in the Tuileries, and that box contained correspondence between royalty and Mirabeau, royalty and Barnave, royalty and many another hapless man. The three votes were taken—was the King guilty? might he appeal to the people? what should be his punishment? Each question was answered against him, and among the frowning faces that started up to vote "Death" appeared the "blue-red" face and wild eyes of Louis's cousin, Philippe Egalité, *ci-devant* Duc d'Orleans.

The wife and sister and children heard the sentence shouted under their windows, while the faithful counsel who broke it to the King faltered and wept as they announced it. Louis received it calmly and patiently. The head that had worn the crown was weary enough. That cap of Charlemagne's had indeed pressed heavily even on those tranquil brows.[1] Had it not been for the dear ones he was to leave behind him in such sorry circumstances, Louis might well have been willing to lay down both crown and head together. He had already written his will, "full of placidity, simplicity, pious sweetness," forgiveness of his enemies, faith in his God.

The privilege of a parting interview with his family was granted to the King. Once again the little group met, for the last time. It was between

[1] At the moment of his coronation, when the crown was put on his head, Louis murmured, "*elle me gêne.*"

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eight and nine o'clock on Sunday evening, the eve of his execution. There was no greater privacy allowed them than could be procured by the closing of the glass doors between two little rooms. At the stove in the deep embrasure of the window in the outer room, two or three men of the municipal guard, wearing their hats and tricolour cockades, stood warming themselves. The family sat together for more than an hour, the chairs drawn close, the Dauphin between his father's knees. The King told how it had been with him; spoke of his grief, and of his horror of civil war; bade his son not revenge him. The listeners heard through their sobs. There is another glimpse of the group—a picture in words, as the King dismissed them with a promise, which he did not mean to keep, of seeing them again next morning.

The King wore a brown coat, a white Marseilles vest, grey casimir knee-breeches, grey silk stockings, and gold buckles in his shoes, his hair a little powdered—the dress of a quiet, somewhat heavy-looking man in his prime—not without a simple dignity, that of his rank, and still more of his innocence. The Queen and the princesses wore white muslin gowns, muslin fichus, little white muslin caps trimmed with lace, and lace-bordered handkerchiefs tied over the caps, the *négligée* or undress frequently worn then by women of their station.

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The Queen's hair was almost white.[1] The Dauphin was in a little coat and trousers of greenish-grey casimir, a falling white collar, his fair hair hanging in curls about his face and shoulders. The Queen clasped the King's right hand, and leant on his shoulder; her left arm was round the Dauphin, who clung to his father and mother. Madame Elizabeth was on the other side, with both hands round her brother's arm; Madame Royale, from her childhood the fondest of daughters to the fondest of fathers, held the King's disengaged hand, and sank on the floor at his feet, sobbing aloud.[2] Such is the minute description of the appearance and attitudes of the actors in this tragedy; but who dare reveal their hearts?

The Queen threw herself dressed upon the bed, to be ready for the morning's meeting—silent, but shivering with the involuntary convulsive movement of utmost misery, so that she could be heard in the adjoining room. She was waiting still for that final interview with the husband of her youth, the father of her children, long after the drums had beaten the *reveillé* at five o'clock, after the Irish Abbé Edgeworth had celebrated mass, and administered the

[1] Before the Princesse de Lamballe's return to France, the Queen sent her friend a ring, containing a lock of Marie Antoinette's silvered hair, with the inscription, "whitened by her misfortunes."

[2] The eye-witness Cléry to Madame Vigée-Lebrun.

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sacrament; after the King had driven off in the carriage which took him and the Abbé to the Place de la Revolution, through a city armed to the teeth, but "silent as the grave," all houses closed. When Samson and his assistants would have bound the King's hands, the indignity fired the long-suffering spirit, and Louis resisted, till the Abbé reminded him of who had suffered His hands to be bound. The King would have addressed the people, but Santerre, commanding the National Guard, called "*Tambours*," and the drums were beaten. Louis, struggling to accomplish his purpose—one man against six executioners—was fastened to the plank. "Son of St. Louis, ascend to Heaven," said the fearless Abbé, as the blow fell. In one corner of the Place de la Revolution, on the skirts of the crowd, stood a *cabriolet*, in which lurked Philippe Egalité, a spectator of the execution. It was the 21st January, 1793. At the time of his death, Louis XVI. was in his thirty-ninth year. The King's body was buried that night in an open coffin, filled with quick-lime, in the common cemetery of the Madeleine, not far from the spot where lay the victims of the accidental fire which happened during the marriage rejoicings of Louis and Marie Antoinette. Louis sent to the Queen, by Cléry, the wedding ring she had given him, his seal, and portions of her hair, and those of his children, which he had been accustomed to wear

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about him. But Cléry was not permitted to return to the Temple, and it was only after some time, and with great difficulty, that the tokens reached the widow. Her despair was such, that her sister and daughter were thankful for an illness of Madame Royale's, which roused the mother from her stupor. The serious illness of the Dauphin followed. The child was pining for air and exercise. Since December, the family had not been permitted to walk in the gardens, and when they were allowed to go on the leads, the place was boarded round, so that the walkers could neither see nor be seen. But the Queen's request for a doctor was granted, and the poor little fellow recovered, only that fresh trials might befall him and all who cared for him.

A man named Tison and his wife had been employed to do the coarse work for the household in the Tower of the Temple, and had acted as spies on the royal family. Madame Tison had become the sole female attendant on the Queen and the princesses, when suddenly she went mad, and was removed to the Hotel Dieu. Before her removal, her antics one day awoke a laugh from Madame Royale—not a musical laugh, for her voice was harsh and rough—it was thought long afterwards the roughness arose from the scenes she had passed through, and the company she had been forced to keep in her youth. The Queen and Madame

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Elizabeth started and looked at each other with a faint dawning smile. The sound was so strange in that place from the girl of fifteen—fair-haired, like her mother, but not otherwise fair, except with the freshness and bloom of her years, somewhat dimmed in this instance—a quiet young creature from her infancy,[1] even before trials had crushed her. Marie Antoinette, at her daughter's age, had just made her entrance into France, the beautiful, beloved Dauphiness. Sweet smiles and musical laughter had hung about her as about a creature of light.

On the 3rd of July, 1793, about six months after his father's death, a decree from the Convention was read to the Queen, ordering that the Dauphin should be separated from his family, and confined in the most secure apartment of the Tower. The little lad of eight years clung sobbing to his mother. She placed him on a bed, and standing at bay, like a lioness whom men would rob of her cub, held the officers off for some minutes, till they threatened to call up the guard and use violence. For an hour she wept and prayed, regardless of threats and insults. At last, worn out by the vain struggle, she suffered his aunt and sister to dress the princely boy; then with Marie Antoinette's old dignity she took him, and with her own trembling hands delivered him up

[1] "She is not a child, she is *un grand personnage*," was said of Madame Royale, admiringly, in the old Versailles days.

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to the officers. The Queen petitioned the Convention for leave to see her son, to wait upon him at his meals, as she had of late been accustomed to do. She promised piteously that, if she were allowed to do so for the sake of his health, which none understood as she did, she would neither speak to him nor caress him while she served him. The prayer was rejected. In fact, as Marie Antoinette soon discovered, her son was entrusted to the lowest, most heartless of ruffians, Simon the shoemaker, who worked at the Temple; that young Louis, whose hand his sister had kissed on the day of their father's death, in token of her allegiance to her King, might be brought up to his guardian's trade, and trained as a good *sans culotte.* The man made the child his servant, beat him, mocked him, forced him to drink wine, to which he was totally unaccustomed, and which hurt him; taught him, under pain of his master's displeasure, to swear and to sing the scurrilous songs of the day. When his mother had crept to the leads, and watched for hours at a chink in the boards through which she had a chance of seeing the boy pass in the distance—her only pleasure —one more pang pierced her heart, to find his mourning for his father cast aside, and Louis XVI.'s son clad in the red jacket and red cap of the republicans who had overthrown the monarchy and slain his father.

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The Queen, her sister-in-law and daughter, were, for the few more weeks they remained together, shut up in one room, without any maid-servant—Madame Elizabeth and Madame Royale sweeping the floor and making the beds, "which they did slowly and with difficulty at first, they had been so unused to the task."

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CHAPTER XVI.

THE CONCIERGERIE.

AT two o'clock in the morning of the 2nd August, 1793, a month from the day that her son had been taken from her, the "widow Capet" was awakened from her fitful slumbers to hear the decision of the Convention, which commanded that she should be removed to the prison of the Conciergerie, there to await her trial. The Queen received the summons composedly and in silence, and proceeded to make up a bundle of clothes, while her companions implored, without avail, permission to go with her. She had to dress before the officers. Her pockets were taken from her, and the contents sealed up, to be opened before the tribunal. She was left only a pocket-handkerchief and a smelling-bottle. Marie Antoinette clasped her daughter round the neck and kissed her, bidding her keep up her spirits, take care of her aunt, and obey her as a second mother. The Queen then held her faithful sister in her arms, and

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recommended her children to Madame Elizabeth, who whispered a few words back, on which the Queen went, without looking round again. Having heard the *procés* read at the foot of the Tower, in going out she struck her forehead against the wicket, which was low. Her conductors—two municipal officers—asked her whether she had hurt herself. "No," she said; "nothing can hurt me more." She drove in the darkness of the summer night through the streets of Paris to the Conciergerie.

The Queen was taken into one of the common cells —a small damp room, with a brick floor. The space was only seven feet by fifteen, and she was not allowed the whole of it, as part was reserved for the gendarmes appointed to watch her day and night. The room held her bed—a low folding bed, with the pillow resting against the wall—a folding screen four feet high, a wash-stand and arm-chair, a little table with a drawer, a stool, two little prison chairs. The arm-chair, and a crucifix which she used, are still shown in the room. She had no looking-glass, and the girl, Rosalie Lamorlière, who waited upon her, lent the Queen a common small hand-glass in a red wood frame, together with a band-box for some of her clothes.

This cell, and another similar to it, the Queen occupied for more than two months, till the heat of summer had waned into the chillness of autumn.

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She had sent to the Temple, in the early days of her imprisonment, asking for her knitting-box, "because she had undertaken to knit a pair of stockings for the Dauphin." Madame Elizabeth and Madame Royale, knowing how fond the Queen had been of occupying herself with needlework, sent also all the wool and silk they could find; but the parcel never reached its destination. It was withheld, lest she should use the knitting-needles to shorten her life. She had still needles, and white thread, with which her only black gown was darned. The white morning gowns she continued to wear grew grey and soiled in such a region. She was allowed an iron to smooth over her muslin caps and neckerchiefs. The gaoler Richard and his wife were humane people. They showed Marie Antoinette pity, and ran great risks to procure her some alleviation of her misery. One morning Madame Richard brought in her little child—a fair-haired creature of eight or nine years. The Queen took it eagerly in her arms, kissed and fondled it, then put it from her, bursting into tears. She had contrived to keep about her still a little miniature of the Dauphin, with a lock of his hair wrapped up in a small canary-coloured kid glove he had worn.

The prisoner was allowed her usual food to dinner, chicken or veal. She had always drunk only water,

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which, from the time of her imprisonment in the Temple, some compassionate souls—peasant women, it is said—had continued to bring her from *Ville d'Avray*, a pretty village near St. Cloud, as the water of the Seine made her ill. She was served off pewter dishes; she had generally to go to bed by the light reflected from the court. As the season advanced, she suffered from the chill of the damp cell. She was becoming rheumatic, and had to put her pillow on her feet to keep them warm. The Sisters of Charity of St. Roche got her thick woollen stockings. Could this be the woman who had been clad in purple and fine linen, silver gauze like the misty veil of sunrise, and diamonds like stars in her hair and bosom, to wait on whom had been held the greatest honour conferred on the princes of the land?

Marie Antoinette was not utterly without friends in her sore extremity. A Demoiselle Fouché, of whom we know nothing save her name and her womanliness, made unheard-of exertions to reach the Queen, and succeeded. She gained admission to the cell several times. She had heard of the rye bread of the North, of which the Queen was fond, and brought it to her. She would have smuggled in pen and ink, but the Queen refused to have them, lest their discovery should compromise the girl. Either Mademoiselle Fouché or Richard did

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the Queen a greater service still. A *non-juring* priest, named Moguin, was introduced by one of the two, and Marie Antoinette had the comfort of hearing mass, and confessing and communicating according to her conscience.

More hearts than Mademoiselle Fouché's were full of the Queen in her last strait, burning with anxiety for her, swelling with pain, shame, and sorrow because they could do nothing for her, throbbing with desire to make one more effort. Necker's daughter, from her exile, had written a letter full of passionate eloquence, protesting against the national crime about to be committed. More than one futile plot, resulting only in the death of the more prominent of its promoters, had been nipped in the bud.[1] A special plot is known as "the affair of the carnation." Some of the gendarmes brought Marie Antoinette flowers—carnations, tube-roses, rockets smelling of her gardens at little Trianon. A man contrived to make her a sign in giving her a carnation. The first moment she believed herself unobserved, the Queen tore it open, and found a note containing the words, "What do you think of doing? I have been in prison;

[1] One is known as the affair of the "Five Hundred." The token used was a heart formed of crimson ribbon, with the words, "Long live Louis XVII., King of France." The conspiracy had for its apparent head an unfortunate wig-maker, but five hundred gentlemen are said to have been concerned in it.

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I have got out by a miracle; I will come on Friday." Who wrote this note is not known, but many believe that behind the Chevalier Rougeville or Rougemont, the ostensible agent in the business, stood the brother of the Queen's old playfellows, the "messenger" sent by the Duchesse Louise[1] to aid her friend at all hazards, Prince George of Darmstadt, and the Queen may have known his handwriting.

Marie Antoinette had already made use of a pin to scratch sentences on the wall, which were afterwards effaced; and when the girl Rosalie was engaged playing cards with the gendarmes, the Queen pricked on a morsel of paper, "I am kept in sight; I cannot speak or write." It is supposed the man with the carnation managed to speak to her. At least, more words are said to have passed between them. "Does your heart fail you?" on his part. On hers, "It never fails me; but I am deeply afflicted." Then she added with the pin on the paper, "I trust you; I will come."

Madame Elizabeth and Madame Royale believed more passed—that it was arranged the Queen should speak on the day mentioned to a certain man on guard, but that in her agitation she addressed the

[1] An affectionate letter, written by Marie Antoinette after the 20th June, 1792, to the Duchesse Louise, is still in existence at Darmstadt. The Queen writes of a "messenger" from the Duchesse whom Marie Antoinette is not able to receive at the Tuileries.

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wrong man, and the plot was discovered. Rougemont and his instigator, if he had one, eluded the vigilance of the Convention, only the man on guard who had served the Royalists perished. The effect that this affair had on the Queen's condition was, that she was put into another small cell: her wedding ring, which had been spared before, and her little stock of linen, were taken from her, with the last doled out, thenceforth, at intervals.

It was towards the end of Marie Antoinette's confinement that an English gentleman was suffered to look in and see her in her cell, for it is alleged she was made a spectacle of, and shown to anyone who cared for the sight, provided he or she testified no sympathy. She is described as sitting in a kind of stupor, mercifully oblivious to what was passing round her, dressed in a gown which had once been white, occupying an old worn-out chair made of straw, which scarcely supported her weight.

On the eve of the 13th of October, Marie Antoinette was summoned to the hall of the Conciergerie to undergo her private examination before a committee of the Revolutionary Tribunal. She was without her two last friends. The priest Moguin was ill, and Mademoiselle Fouché had been forced to go to Orleans. But Maria Theresa's daughter roused herself for the ordeal. She arranged her dress decently—she wore her black gown, with a white

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fichu crossed on her breast. She had parted her hair in front, and put on a little perfumed powder. She added to her muslin cap, with its plaited border, mourning lappets, which she had kept in Rosalie's band-box for the occasion; under these lappets she put the black crape veil that helped to make a widow's cap.

Short-sighted always, the Queen had almost lost the sight of one eye, from want of sleep and the bad air she had been breathing, and she was giddy and bewildered from her close confinement. "*Je vois à peine à me conduire*," she said, as she groped her way out of the cell, and she had to take the arm of the officer of the gendarmes to go down the stair.

On the Queen's entrance, at six o'clock in the evening, into the hall, dimly lit by a couple of wax candles, she was accommodated with a seat on a bench. She answered with promptness and decision any question put to her. The French people had been deceived, but not by her or her husband. Their welfare had been and was her chief desire. She identified the articles which had been taken from her before she left the Temple. There was no need to tell who was the original of the miniature of the Princesse de Lamballe; but of those miniatures representing the Princesses of Darmstadt the Queen said, "These are two ladies with whom I was brought

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up at Vienna."[1] The remaining contents of the pockets—a prayer to the "*sacré cœur de Jesus*," a prayer to the "Immaculate Conception," and the Dauphin's little cipher table—spoke for themselves, and were probably tossed aside with contempt.

On the following day, the widow Capet, wearing the same dress, was brought into the hall for a trial which lasted seventy-six hours. She was allowed an arm-chair at the bar of the court. There is a quaint old print which has preserved the scene. The five judges—who were all to fall by the guillotine—seated, wearing their plumed hats:—Fouquier Tinville, the public prosecutor, who was to go the way that he had sent many a prisoner—the jury composed of the poorest tradesmen—the solitary figure in the chair confronting them—the crowded tribunes, many women as well as men on the benches. No doubt there were *tricoteuses*, *poissardes*, market-women—some who might have sat at the banquet at the Tuileries on the Dauphiness's public entrance into Paris, or been

[1] The fate of the playfellows was very different. Princess Charlotte, born the same year as the Queen, married, in 1784, her brother-in-law, Prince Charles of Mecklenburg-Strelitz. She died, as she had foreboded, like her sister, Princess Caroline, in child-birth, in the same room of the same castle, in 1785, when she was thirty years of age. Princess Louise married her cousin, the hereditary Prince of Darmstadt, in 1777. She lived to be an old woman, surrounded by attached children and children's children. She was found dead on her *chaise-longue*, having passed away without a struggle in 1829. She survived her friend, her "dear Queen of France," twenty-six years.

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of those who had called on her to bear children to France, or who had gone to Versailles to wish her joy of her first-born son. One of these women cried, as she looked at the prisoner, "How proud she is!"

The Queen was accused of treason on various counts—misleading her husband, inducing him to put his *veto* on laws which were for the benefit of the people, favouring the aristocrats, corresponding with her brother the Emperor. Beyond this there was a "hideous indictment," likening her to the most depraved of women—Messalina, Agrippina, Brunhilda — and charging her with abominable crimes.

As at the trial of Louis, there were honourable men who acted as the Queen's counsel; but neither time nor means were granted to them to conduct the defence. Among the witnesses called on the first accusations was Bailly, the mathematician and astronomer, who had been Mayor of Paris. At the question—Did he know the prisoner? the sorrowful cry burst from his lips—soon to be silent also—"Ah! yes, I know Madame," and he bent his head in reverence.

She answered to this portion of the examination without hesitation or perplexity—a little disdainfully. When asked if she persisted in her denial—"My plan is not denial; it is the truth I have said, and I

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persist in that."[1] To the monstrous indictment already mentioned she said not a word, only sometimes moved her fingers on the arm of her chair, "as when one plays on a harpsichord." A juryman observed that she had not replied to this—referring to the foulest of the lies—to which her accuser had got the signature of the miserable little Louis by first drugging him with wine. "I have not answered," she exclaimed with noble emotion, "because nature refuses to answer such a charge brought against a mother. I appeal to all the mothers who are here." Had ever woman woes like this woman's?

The sentence of death was pronounced upon her, and she was asked if she had anything to say. She shook her head in silence. It was five o'clock in the morning of the 16th October, the day fixed for her execution, before she was taken back to her cell, or, as some say, to the condemned cell. She was at last granted paper, pen, and ink, with which she wrote a loving, considerate letter to Madame Elizabeth, containing messages to the Queen's children, kindred, and friends, and a request, like that of her husband, that she might not be avenged.[2] She swallowed

[1] Carlyle.

[2] The letter did not reach its destination, but it was preserved among the papers of the public prosecutor, and twenty-three years later was given to Marie Antoinette's daughter. It was read for a time in every church in France, on the anniversary of the Queen's death.

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a cup of chocolate, and a little cake called a *mignonette.*

With her old genial longing for sympathy, she said piteously to one of the people with her, "You know that they are going to make me die. Tell your worthy mother that I thank her for her care, and charge her to pray God for me." The Queen was on her knees when the messengers of the law entered, and she rose to receive them. "Pay attention," a gendarme said; "they are going to read to you your sentence;" and the men uncovered, which they were not wont to do. "This reading is useless," said she; "I know only too well the sentence." "It does not signify; it is necessary it should be read." The Queen was silent. As the reader finished, Henri Samson, the son of the executioner of Louis XVI., a young man of great size and strength, came in, and advanced towards Marie Antoinette with the words, "Present your hands." She drew back two steps, troubled, and said, "Are you going to bind my hands? They did not bind Louis XVI.'s hands." The judges said to Samson, "Do your duty." "O, my God!" cried the Queen. At these words Henri Samson seized the poor hands roughly, and bound them too tightly (*trop fort*) behind her back. She sighed, but kept back the tears ready to flow, looking up to Heaven. When her hands were bound, Samson took off her cap, and cut off her hair. She

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looked round, as if she feared he were going to kill her then and there, and saw him putting her hair into his pocket, to carry it away.[1] She wished to go bareheaded to the scaffold, but she was made to wear one of the muslin caps which she had ironed. She was clad in one of her usual morning gowns of white *piqué* or dimity,[2] with a muslin *fichu* crossed under her chin, and tied behind. Her cap had no lappets, or sign of mourning. She wore black stockings, and prunella shoes, such as she had used in the Conciergerie—the little heels two inches high.

The weather was fine. There were two white horses in the cart in which Marie Antoinette sat, along with Samson and a priest called Gérard, who had taken the oath to the Constitution, and was dressed as a layman. She refused to receive any religious services from him, and spoke only a few words to him. Samson held the ends of the thick cord which tied her hands. There were thirty thousand soldiers called out, and cannon placed at the ends of the bridges, in the squares, and at the crossings, all to line the road to the scaffold for one desolate woman, a broken-hearted

[1] It was burnt in the great vestibule after the execution. Some of it seems to have been saved, and it was believed a lock reached the De Tourzel family.

[2] There is no proof of the story that a poor actress lent her the gown.

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widow. But she was more; she was Maria Theresa's daughter; she had once been the queen of a million of hearts.

As on the occasion of Louis's death, every house was closed, and every window shut. But along the entire route there was a tremendous crowd, from which came at intervals cries of "*Vive la Nation*," "*À bas la Tyrannie.*" Nevertheless most people uncovered, and the police had difficulty in hindering the citizens of Paris from putting themselves, with their wives and children, at the windows. The Queen did not heed the cries; she seemed to notice the tricolour decorations in the Rue de St. Honoré and other streets, and to read the inscriptions to *Liberté, Egalité, et Fraternité* on the fronts of the houses. Before St. Roch she was insulted by some miserable people; but at another point a little child kissed its hand to her, and it was thought she saw and was touched by the innocent greeting. As she passed the Tuileries—her home, where her children had lived—she took one last look, and was visibly moved.

The guillotine was in the Place de la Revolution, on the side of the Champs Elysées, at the foot of the pedestal which had been surmounted by a statue of Louis XV., where the obelisk stands to-day. The Queen was executed with her head turned to the Champs Elysées, on the Tuileries side, between the Tuileries railing and the pedestal on which

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the people had placed a female figure of Liberty, wearing the red cap, and holding in her right hand a lance, and in her left a globe supported on her knees.

Some one, probably the priest Gérard, spoke to Marie Antoinette on the way, and told her now was the moment to arm her courage. "Courage!" she exclaimed; "I have served an apprenticeship to it for a long time; there is no fear of my losing it at this moment."

Alone, without the aid of her church, the Queen ascended the scaffold quickly, and knelt down. Some said she spoke in a firm voice, loud enough to be heard, "Lord, enlighten and soften my executioners. Farewell, my children; I go to rejoin your father" ("*Seigneur, éclairez et touchez mes bourreaux. Adieu, mes enfants; je vais rejoindre votre père*"), and received the blow. Her head was shown to the people. She was buried, like the King, in an open coffin among quick-lime, near where he lay, among many a victim of the Revolution, in the cemetery of the Madeleine. Her rags of clothes were carried away, in one of the sheets taken off her bed, from her cell in the Conciergerie, and confiscated to the nation. The last entry of her expenses was, "The widow Capet, for the coffin, six francs. Twenty-five francs for the grave and for the grave-diggers."

"Thus died, on the 16th October, 1793, Marie

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Antoinette Josephe Jeanne de Lorraine, the daughter of an Emperor and wife of a King. She was thirty-seven years and eleven months old. She had been twenty-three years in France, and had survived her husband eight months."

Seven weeks and five days after the Queen's death, the Duchesse de Polignac drew her last breath at Schönbrunn, which she had reached in her wanderings. People have attributed her death to chagrin at the loss of wealth and power, but surely the harsh inference is uncalled for. The two women had dwelt together like sisters for fifteen years, and when the elder came to realise that it would have been better for both that they had never met, that she had only helped to bring about her Queen and friend's destruction, it may well be that "she came to envy the fate of the Princesse de Lamballe." Madame de Polignac was always a delicate little woman. She had pined more and more with anxiety and distress. The news of the King's death had inflicted on her a shock which reduced her health to the lowest ebb. Her friends sought to conceal from her the final catastrophe, but she guessed it by seeing Vienna in mourning. Then she had but one wish—that of rejoining her "*chère Antoinette.*" The Duchesse de Polignac died on the 3rd December, 1793. Apparently grief killed her. The blood of Gabrielle de Polignac flows in the veins of more than one noble English family. One of her two

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grand-daughters, Aglaë and Corisande de Gramont,[1] married the Earl of Tankerville.

The tidings of Marie Antoinette's death, with the manner of it, awoke the grief and horror of every Court in Europe. Her charms, her errors, her virtues, her brilliant fortunes, her piteous reverses, will never cease to melt all hearts, so long as manly pity and womanly tenderness endure.

[1] Their mother, the Duchesse de Guiche, after following the fortunes of Madame for years, went on a mission from the Comte d'Artois to Buonaparte, and procured an interview with the First Consul at Malmaison, by means of an old acquaintance of hers, Josephine de Beauharnais. The Duchesse de Guiche died suddenly at Edinburgh, in her thirty-sixth year, in 1803.

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CHAPTER XVII.

THE CHILDREN OF FRANCE.

THE princesses in the Tower of the Temple only heard of the Queen's sentence and its execution from the criers in the streets. In the same way they learned that they had one enemy the less when Philippe Egalité laid down his dishonoured head on the block. They spent the winter in the strictest confinement. On the evening of the 9th of May, 1794, Madame Elizabeth was taken to the Conciergerie, where she occupied a cell near one of those which the Queen had filled. Her trial came on next day, and she was condemned to death. She asked to be placed in the room with the other condemned prisoners. She spoke to them, encouraging and consoling them, especially one poor timid Marquise, who shrank from the violent end in store for her. Next morning, Madame Elizabeth drove among twenty-six victims in a row of tumbrils to the Place de la Revolution. At the foot of the guillotine, in answer to a request of the Marquise's, the princess kissed each

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of the women who had come in the cart with her. One after another died before their gentle consoler. At last the moment of release came for one of the most blameless, modest, and unselfish of women. She had reached the age of thirty years, the time which had been fixed for her entrance on a religious life.

It is terrible to think of the lonely girl left behind, and of what that night must have been to her.

On the 27th of July, a visit of some members of the Convention to the Dauphin brought to light the condition to which Simon had reduced him. The child had been latterly left alone day and night, locked and bolted into his room, a den of dirt and squalor. He had not had his shirt and stockings changed for a year. His bed and his person were covered with vermin. His body was full of disease, his mind had become imbecile; all that had been done for him during many months had been to place food and a pitcher of water beside him—the last he had not had either strength or sense to use—for washing purposes. Compunction, as well as disgust, was awakened by the lamentable spectacle. A commissioner named Laurent was appointed to look after Louis Capet's children. He and another commissioner, called Gomin, did what they could, too late, for poor little Louis XVII., the child of so much love and care. They caused him to be cleansed,

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visited him regularly, were kind to him. But his joints swelled; fever set in; he wasted away, and died without pain on the 9th of June, 1795. He was aged ten years and two months.

Madame Royale was still in the Temple Tower. She had always been able to keep herself clean, to sweep out her room, to knit a little, to read over and over again some books of devotion and old travels. M. Laurent did something to soften her captivity, the term of which was drawing to a close. Her release was arranged; a transfer was to be effected between Madame Royale on the one side, and six French prisoners[1] in the hands of the Austrians on the other. On the 19th December, 1795, when it was past eleven at night, under the stars and the cloudy darkness, a man was seen to leave the Temple with a tottering woman clinging to his arm. The man was Benezeh, the Minister of the Interior, the woman Madame Royale.[2] A family of five persons had entered these doors; one orphan girl came out. It happened to be her seventeenth birthday. She had been imprisoned three years and four months, during which her youth had acquired the attributes of age, and the iron had entered into her soul, never to be withdrawn. The same night she started for Vienna.

There were new times and new faces at Schönbrunn.

[1] One of them was Drouet, the postmaster of St. Ménehould.

[2] Life of the Duchesse d'Angoulême.

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The Emperor, Francis II., was no nearer relation than a cousin to Marie Antoinette's daughter. The throes of the French Revolution had shaken, or were about to shake, every throne of every descendant of Maria Theresa and Louis XIV., Naples, Spain, the Low Countries, Northern Italy. Clotilde and her "Pie'mont" were wanderers for the rest of their days.[1] Austria was by no means desirous to provoke the hostility of France. Madame Royale received but a cold reception, though she had her mother's suite of rooms and a train of ladies and servants assigned to her. An attempt was made to induce her to claim some of the dominions of her uncle, Louis XVIII., and in that case to accept the suit of the Archduke Charles. When she refused, because her father had destined her to marry her cousin, d'Artois's son, the Duc D'Angoulême, the Empress, a daughter of Caroline of Naples, is said to have so far forgotten herself as to give Madame Royale a blow, the young girl remarking bitterly that she had only exchanged one captivity for another. Indeed she was

[1] Madame Lebrun saw poor "Gros Madame" after she had become one of the thinnest of women, and had cut off her hair as a sign that she had retired from the world. From the date of her brother's and sisters' deaths she never wore a gown of any material save black woollen. She earned such a reputation for sanctity, that seven years after her death, in the forty-fourth year of her age, at Naples, in 1802, the Pope instituted an investigation into her life, and on its proving satisfactory, awarded her the degree of "Venerable."

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not permitted to see or speak with any of her countrymen, unless in the presence and within the hearing of her German ladies. For three years, a figure in deep mourning, and a face which was always grave, mingled with the Court circle at Vienna. At the end of that time, Madame Royale was allowed to join Louis XVIII. at Mittau, "the dull capital of dull Courland." All the feeling which he possessed, and the policy in which he had never been deficient, caused the exiled King to treat his niece with great regard, while at the same time his wife rejoined him after nearly seven years' separation. On June 10th, 1799, Madame Royale was married, at Mittau, to her cousin, the Duc d'Angoulême. She was in her twenty-second year; he was twenty-four. He was much more like his uncle, Louis XVI., than his father. The Duc d'Angoulême was a young man of blameless life—cold, quiet, dull, but honest, devout, and brave in his own way, with only one passion, which he was never able to gratify—that of distinguishing himself as a soldier. The Duchesse d'Angoulême's marriage, in spite of some gossip to the contrary, seems to have been fairly happy. In consequence of a caprice of Paul III., the exiles were compelled to take a terrible winter journey from Mittau to Warsaw. On the death of the Czar, they returned to Mittau. Abbé Edgeworth was in Louis XVIII.'s suite. When he was seized with malignant fever, no persuasion could keep

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the Duchesse from his side. He had waited on her father to the last, and she would wait on him; she closed his eyes. After the peace of Tilsit, between the Czar and Buonaparte, the French royal family came to England in 1808. Louis received a pension from King George, and resided with his household, first at the Duke of Buckingham's seat of Gosfield, in Essex, and afterwards at Hartwell Hall, near Aylesbury, which the King rented from Sir G. Lee. During the stay in Essex, Louis's partner—poor, silent, Machiavellian Italian princess—died without ever having been hailed Queen on French soil. The little Comtesse d'Artois had died long before at Gratz. The news of Napoleon's marriage to the Archduchess Marie Louise, the grand-niece of Marie Antoinette and great grand-daughter of Maria Theresa, who had been refused to the Duc d'Angoulême's younger brother, the Duc de Berri, reached the family at Hartwell, and filled them with consternation. Then Louis XVIII., who was generally pointedly respectful and kind to his niece, indulged in a brutal speech, which betrayed her mother's old enemy. "The occupant of the throne of France marries an Austrian Archduchess, a princess of the house of Lorraine, and enters France, attended by a De Rohan. When was there ever such a combination, and ruin did not follow?" Others smiled, but the Duchesse d'Angoulême turned away weeping.

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In 1814, after the retreat from Moscow, the Bourbons' turn came, and Louis XVIII. was proclaimed at Bourdeaux. Two post-chaises, the postilions wearing white favours and waving white flags, dashed up to Hartwell Park on the 25th of March. It was the first deputation come to escort the King home. The Duchesse had left France, stealing away by night, a forlorn girl of seventeen; she returned in broad day —receiving, to begin with, a cordial and magnificent reception—a staid, austere woman of thirty-six. She re-entered the Tuileries sobbing, and fainted as she was about to re-cross the threshold of her mother's rooms. One of the first acts which she induced the King to perform was the removal of the bones of the late King and Queen from the cemetery in which they had lain, that they might be placed, with great pomp, in the last resting-place of the Kings of France—St. Denis. The people looked on in doubtful silence; another generation had arisen since the deeds of violence which ended in the slaughter of Louis and Marie Antoinette. Still this recall of them seemed like a reproach to the sons of the actors in the great tragedy. It was a new world to which the Duchesse, with the old, heavy, cynical King, and the remnants of the old nobility, returned. It was only the Bourbons who had learnt nothing and forgotten nothing. Young France would let former grievances rest, and if it were forced to dwell on anything past

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with regret, that would be on the victories of "*le petit caporal*," and the triumph which these had awakened in the national heart. In a year, Napoleon landed from Elba, and the Bourbons were again fugitives. The Duchesse was the last to quit France. It was when she sat on horseback beneath the old white flag in the Place at Bordeaux, and, with General Clauzel's cannon mounted and pointed against the spot, strove desperately to rally the regiments round their colours, that she won from Buonaparte the compliment of being called "the only man in her family." Three months later, Waterloo had been fought and lost by Buonaparte, and the Bourbons were restored.

The Duchesse d'Angoulême led a quiet, orderly life, distinguished by the strict performance of the rites of her religion, and of charity to the poor. From the time of her release from the Temple, she never failed to keep the anniversaries of her parents' deaths with fastings, tears, and prayers. To these anniversaries she added that of the death of the Duc d'Enghien, son of the Duc de Bourbon, and grandson of the Duc de Condé, shot by Napoleon's orders on German territory. She had an oratory in one of Marie Antoinette's rooms. There, in a drawer in the shoemaker's bench at which Louis XVII. had worked, the Duchesse d'Angoulême preserved the cap which the Queen had made to wear before the Tribunal, the

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neckerchief which the executioner had taken from the bosom of Madame Elizabeth, and the waistcoat, coat, and cravat which Louis XVI. had worn on the scaffold. The Duchesse always maintained some of the habits which she had acquired in the Temple. She rose at five in summer and six in winter, and lit her fire with her own hands before she went to morning mass. Drive where she might, she would never allow her carriage to pass through the Place de la Concorde, which had been the Place de la Revolution. It seemed as if she neither forgot nor forgave, and the continual remembrance of what they and their fathers had done pressed heavily on the people. She compelled their respect; but never was there a woman less calculated by her stern fidelity and rigid simplicity to win the fancy of a volatile, light-hearted nation. To complete her demerits, to her great grief she was childless.

It was a sensible relief to the gayer spirits, even in the Faubourg St. Germain, when the Duc de Berri married Caroline of Naples. He had been a boisterous, dissipated young man—a rude edition of his father. She was plain, more full of frolic than discretion, but at least there were spirit and stir in the Tuileries once more for a brief space. On the night of Sunday, the 13th of February, 1820, the Duc de Berri was assassinated in leaving the opera-house. He and his Duchesse had one daughter, and on the 29th of September

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his posthumous son was born, and received the title of Duc de Bourdeaux. It was the first time that the people had seen the Duchesse d'Angoulême look glad. In 1824, Louis XVIII., an aged and infirm man, died; and on the accession of the Comte d'Artois as Charles X., the Duc and Duchesse d'Angoulême became Dauphin and Dauphiness—the last who bore the name.

On her way from Vichy, in July, 1830, the Dauphiness visited the theatre at Dijon and was received with execrations, when she knew only too well that "something had happened in Paris." She had never been able, from the days of her youth, to listen to the shouts of the people, even when they expressed joy, without shuddering. The next day she walked in the disguise of a peasant through the town of Versailles, and took her place in a common, dirty public conveyance called a *coucou* in order to reach St. Cloud. She found the King at Rambouillet. Already he had signed the "Ordinances"[1] which signed away the crown from himself and his children, *the Prince de Polignac guiding his hand.* From the balcony of St. Cloud, the Duchesse de Berri saw through a telescope the tricolour hoisted at Versailles. She went boldly to Paris, and offered the child in her arms to the people as their sovereign; but their choice

[1] These Ordinances abolished the liberty of the press, dissolved the Chamber of deputies, &c., &c.

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fell on a man, not a baby—Louis Philippe, son of Philippe Egalité, Duc d'Orleans. The elder branch of the Bourbons was set aside; Charles X. abdicated. So did his son, Louis XIX., after reigning a minute. "The only man in the family" had not a voice in the matter, except a voice of loyal forgiveness and affection. The flight which completed their suppression followed. They sailed from Cherbourg, a Larochejacquelin conducting the Duchesse d'Angoulême to the boat. The whole family came to England again, to the neighbourhood of Weymouth. They preferred to reside there incognito, and little Henri de Bourdeaux got the name of Comte de Chambord from an estate which the Parisians had presented to him in his infancy. In the autumn, the family went down to Scotland, and dwelt for two years in Holyrood, the old palace of the Stewarts, the Bourbons' ancient allies, a marvellous company to simple Scotch folks and innocent young eyes. In 1832, on account of the failing health of the Duchesse d'Angoulême, the exiles went to Germany. The same year—against the wish of her father-in-law—Caroline, Duchesse de Berri, landed near Marseilles, and, failing to find friends there, fled to La Vendée. Proscribed by Louis Philippe's government, she lay five months in concealment in a country-house in Brittany, while the whole neighbourhood was at heart her son's. She was taken in her last hiding-place, behind a chimney,

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and imprisoned in the Chateau de Blaze. There she astounded her partisans by confessing her private marriage with an old acquaintance, the son of a Neapolitan nobleman, Prince Lucchesi-Palli. In this respect her history resembled that of her sister, Christina, Queen of Spain. In the course of a year she was set at liberty, and sailed for Sicily. Soon afterwards she was reconciled to the French royal family, but she must have been a thorn in the flesh to the Duchesse d'Angoulême.

In October, 1832, the Duchesse d'Angoulême arrived with her niece at Vienna, and once more occupied her mother's rooms, as she had done thirty-two years before. Thenceforth, her relations with the Austrian Court were friendly. The wanderers had their residence for a time in the Hradschin at Prague, and there, on the thirteenth birthday of the Duc de Bourdeaux, when he was of age according to French law, flocks of Legitimists came to pay Henri V. homage, and to greet his mother on her return from La Vendée. The Duchesse d'Angoulême listened, well pleased, as each old familiar name was announced. The family left Prague, to be out of the way of the Emperor Ferdinand's coronation, and passed from one little German town to another.

Charles X. played his part well as an old King "retired from business." He was exquisitely neat in his plain blue coat, and behaved with perfect courtesy

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and cheerfulness. He took long walks with his daughter-in-law, the Duchesse d'Angoulême, and became particular in his religious observances. He dined at six; then followed his whist-table. When the rubber was finished, D'Angoulême—growing old himself—kissed his father's hand, and led out his Duchesse. Charles X. died of cholera, in his eightieth year, near Göritz, in 1836. The Duchesse d'Angoulême kissed her nephew's hand, as she had kissed that of her little brother in the Temple, in sign of homage. The Duc d'Angoulême died at the age of seventy, in 1844, and was buried beside his father at Göritz. The Duchesse felt his death keenly. He was the last who could recall to her the scenes of her youth. Later, she bought Frohsdorf, a plain white country house, with a dry moat, in a park near the little town of Neustadt, and not far from the Hungarian frontier. She lived there with her nephew and niece, while their mother, the Duchesse de Berri, with her second husband and younger children, resided at Gratz. The Comte de Chambord travelled and occupied himself as a country gentleman, though without for a moment withdrawing his claim through all changes of government to the sovereignty of France. In 1843 he came to England, and tenanted a house in London, in Belgrave Square, where he resided for some time, and kept up a sort of Court. At Frohsdorf, the Duchesse was called "Queen" by her enthusiastic followers;

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while the Comte de Chambord never entered her apartments without the aged lady rising and doing him courtly and affectionate reverence. She had the satisfaction of seeing him wedded to a Marie Beatrix of Modena, who brought him a large fortune, while his sister married into the house of Parma. The Duchesse lived on, surrounded by relics of the Temple, with portraits of those she loved hung above her curtainless bed in her simple room. Her income was ten thousand pounds a-year, sufficient for the maintenance of the hundred persons—all French—of her household, and the discharge of her numerous charities. She saw three rival claimants to the French throne pass away. In October, 1851, she fainted at mass. She insisted on rising from her sick-bed to keep the anniversary of her mother's death, saying she had never failed, and no power on earth would prevent her. She was labouring under inflammation of the lungs. She sat up in her chair arranging papers, taking leave of some friends, and sending messages to others. Her nephew's hand lay in hers while she whispered her farewell. She was seventy-two years of age. She lies buried between her husband and father-in-law, in the vault of the Franciscan convent at Göritz.

The Comte de Chambord dwelt till lately at Frohsdorf, a worthy gentleman of sixty-two years and fixed ideas, still the hope of the French Legiti-

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mists. After an illness of many weeks, he died on the morning of the 24th of August, 1883. He was childless; his sister, the Duchesse de Parma, had children, but, according to the Salic law, Henri de Bourdeaux is succeeded in his claims to the throne of France by the Comte de Paris, son of the late Duc d'Orleans, who was the eldest son of Louis Philippe. A daughter of the Duchesse de Parma married Don Carlos of Spain, and has a son. As he is, on his father's side, a Spanish Bourbon, descended from an elder, while the Orleans family reckon their title from a younger son of Louis XIV., there is a political party that acknowledges him as its future king, and considers that he has prior right to the crown of France.

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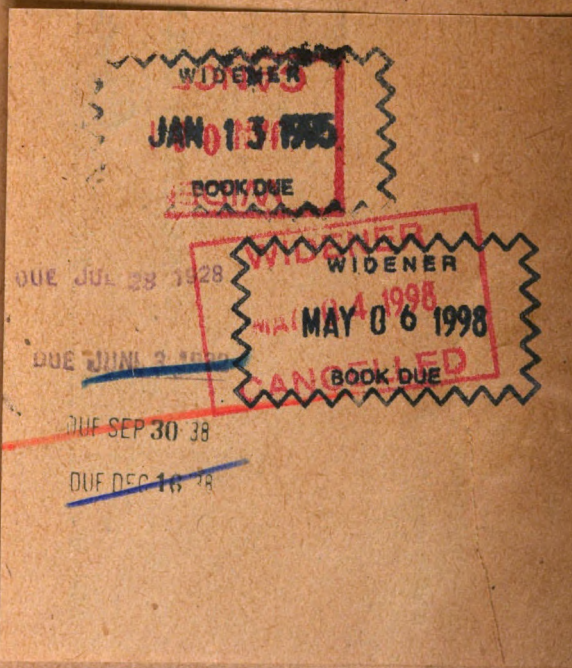

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